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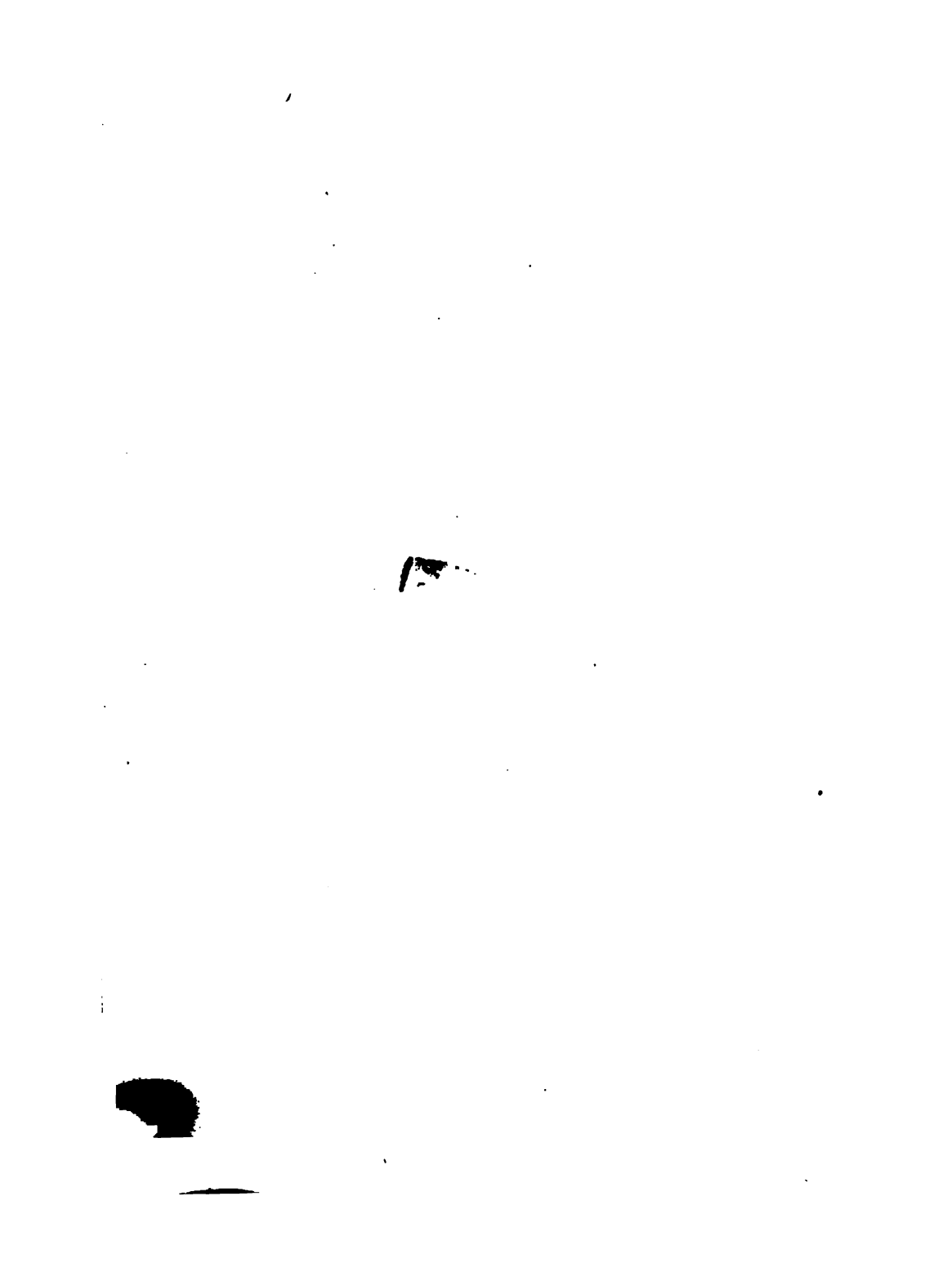
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LOVE AND WAR IN CUBA.

INCLUDING MANY THRILLING SCENES OF THE
LAST YEARS OF SPANISH RULE.

BY

REV. P. L. STANTON, A.M.

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Author of "*Echoes From Foreign Shores*," etc.

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By P. L. STANTON, A.M.

Dedication.

**TO OUR CONSECRATED MISSIONARIES AMONG THE CUBANS,
THIS VOLUME, MANY OF WHOSE BEST THOUGHTS HAVE BEEN IN-
SPIRED BY THOSE EARNEST WORKERS FOR THE
GREATER SALVATION OF CUBA, IS GRATE-
FULLY AND LOVINGLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.**

PREFACE.

Perhaps it should be said that, while this book is in story form, more of real life appears in its pages than is usual with one of its kind. Some of its principal characters retain their own names, and nearly all of them are very real existences. There is much of history and biography.

It has been the author's privilege to travel extensively in the beautiful Island of Cuba, and to mingle much with its diversified and interesting people, studying their customs and religion, and he earnestly seeks to give the readers of the following pages the full benefit of his observations.

Feeling that the purpose of the writer of this book is the purest, and, believing that its pages may be read and studied with interest and profit by both old and young, it is committed to the reading public with the hope and prayer that it may do much to promote the cause of right everywhere and especially in suffering Cuba.

THE AUTHOR.



LOVE AND WAR IN CUBA.

CHAPTER I.

Well up in the beautiful mountains of the Santa Clara Province, of Cuba, in the early springtime of 1873, a boy of more than usual promise was born. When he is pronounced a boy of more than usual promise it is not saying that every boy who comes into the world is not an extraordinary boy. The home in which this one first saw the light was a very humble home, and by the time that light had made its way in at the only opening, a small door, and through the smoke rising from a wood fire in the center of the room, its beams were not the brightest.

The hut, one of the kind so common among the poor of Cuba, was made by weaving together long pieces of palmetto bark for the siding, and then using the branches of the same tree for making a thatched roof. The floor was little more than the bare earth. The whole building, used as cook-room, sitting-room and bedroom, was not more than sixteen by eighteen feet. The furniture was of a coarse sort and the supply scant enough. The bed on which the little fellow spent the

first days of his existence was a very rude affair. During the daytime, when he was not crying—he did cry sometimes—he busied himself looking out at that one small opening which led to the bright world on the outside. As to what his cogitations were during such hours we will have to guess, for he never deigned to reveal them very clearly even to his fond mamma.

It was not specially remarkable that he, when strong enough to do some locomotion for himself, should insist on moving in the direction of the door. Who ever heard of a boy that did not have such an inclination? Soon the fond father had to fasten two poles across the door in such a way as to prevent the boy from crawling out.

Martinez, for that was the name with which the fond father and mother had the village priest to christen him, used to sit by the hour at the obstruction which stopped his outward progress, and watch the great, big, strange world on the outside. One time, when the mother was busy entertaining the grandmother who had run in for a few minutes' stay, he succeeded in climbing over the poles and, chuckling with delight, he was hurrying away as fast as his little feet and hands could take him, when the half-scared, half-delighted mother caught him.

Now, I did not witness this little episode, but just

know it was so, for that very evening when the father returned from his work the mother told him all about it. True, the father said: "Now, Alicia, you are slandering papa's boy," yet he was so glad to believe his pet guilty of such a great performance that he did not know what to do— except to add another pole to the two across the door.

As the years passed Martinez grew into a lively, happy, and handsome lad. It was a gladsome day when he was allowed to go out of the hut by himself. From that time onward most of the daylight hours were spent in the open air, and he did not always show the sweetest spirit when mamma sometimes (he thought it quite often) insisted that he must stay in and watch by his baby sister. Another joyous day came when he was permitted to take his little sister, Juanita was her name, out of doors with him. It was many a happy romp they had beside the small mountain stream which ran down the hollow not far from their home. For a good while that little stream made the line beyond which mamma did not allow them to go.

Neither of the children knew much of vanity as to dress, for they had never been possessors of much of that article deemed so necessary in our northern climes. Even during the coolest winter days they needed very little clothing for comfort, and they could hardly be ex-

pected to care much for it in order to hide their nakedness, because they were accustomed to see the children of some of the neighbors go without any clothing at all. Yet Juanita learned, from her mother, as is the case with most daughters, to love ornament; and Martinez did not object to having a suit "like papa's."

Juan and Alicia Olivera had not always lived in such poverty as now pinched them. Juan was the son of a rich planter and manufacturer and Alicia the daughter of a well-to-do Havana merchant. During the "Ten Years War," their parents had been suspected by the Spanish of being in sympathy with the Cuban insurgents, and the great plantation with its fine sugar factory, and the large store with its contents, and the beautiful city home had all been confiscated, and the owners of these had fled with their families to the mountains for safety, and there began life again in great poverty. Juan and Alicia had been educated about as far as the Cuban schools could take them, and the parents were preparing to send them to the United States for further study when they were so cruelly robbed by the Spanish.

Señor Juan F. Olivera and Señorita Alicia Martinez first met and became interested in each other while she was visiting a friend on a plantation near his father's, and then, while he was in the Havana University, their friendship ripened into warmest attachment. It was

a common sight on Sunday and holiday evenings to see him on his fine Cuban horse, riding back and forth in front of her father's elegant city residence, while she occupied the balcony above. Thus they passed many a happy hour conversing in that dialect peculiar to lovers.

The like calamity which had come upon them and their parents had only deepened their love for each other, and, there in that mountain village, brought together by a strange providence, he prevailed upon her to become his wife.

It was not strange that they deeply deplored their great poverty, especially after Martinez and Juanita came into their home. Nor is it strange that there were feelings of bitterness in their hearts against those who had so wickedly robbed them. But they were too sensible and noble to sit down and bemoan their affliction. Juan made the small farm which he was tilling bring its three or four crops each year. There was also some gain from a few cows he had in a pasture on the steep hillside. His high-spirited and noble wife helped all that she could and never murmured to him about their hard lot.

Their bitter feeling toward the Spanish became more and more intense, and often when Juan carried his produce to the market at the city of Trinidad, which was not many miles away, he could hardly restrain him-

self from open attack upon the Spanish soldiers whose insolence was indeed almost unbearable. Several times there had been threatenings of a serious collision. He did not tell the good wife all, but she knew enough to keep her constantly uneasy.

At last a collision came, and in a very unexpected way. Sometimes Martinez and Juanita, to their unbounded delight, were allowed to accompany their father to market. It was returning they enjoyed most, when they were allowed to ride in the great palm-bark baskets or bags, thrown in saddlebag style across the pack-saddle on the horse, and used to carry produce to the market.

Thus riding one day on the foremost pony of the pack-train, they were so busy playing hide-and-seek across the back of the horse that they did not observe the approach of a line of Spanish soldiers until the officer in charge of the soldiers struck the horse a violent blow over the head with his sword. The horse in pain and fright dashed up the steep bank at the roadside, hurling the children, baskets and all, back over his heels, down into the hard road. The children screamed more from fright than hurt, though they were severely bruised. The angered father who was riding at the rear of the pack-train rushed forward, and springing from his horse, his first impulse was to deal

the insolent officer a blow over the head with his large farm-knife but, remembering that would be death to himself, he did no more than violently push the officer aside. Before he could lift the children to their feet he was seized and overpowered by the soldiers and dragged back towards the city barracks.

CHAPTER II.

To say that Martinez and Juanita were wild with fear and grief when they saw their father dragged away by soldiers whom they, young as they were, had learned to hate, is to put it but mildly. A wicked soldier, seizing Martinez by the arm, gave him a violent shake and commanded him to hush crying. The same cruel treatment was given to Juanita, but the poor little heartbroken child could not stop, but kept up her pitiful sobbing.

When some of the soldiers had driven the pack-train into the road again, others lifted the children with the baskets into the place they had occupied, and bade them go on home, telling Martinez that they would punish him severely if he did not obey. The horses, so accustomed to going back and forth, quietly went on, the leader being only too glad to get away from such cruel company. The horse which Juan had been riding was caught and led on after his struggling almost crazed master.

When the soldiers reached their barracks on a hill overlooking and completely commanding the city, they thrust the prisoner into a dark and dirty cell. There he lay, without food or water for the balance of the day

and all the dreary night, not knowing what fate awaited him.

The scene at the village when the children with the pack-train arrived is easier imagined than described. The mother was almost frantic with grief, but soon became calm with a sort of desperate determination that nothing should be neglected that could be done to secure the release of her husband. While she was bathing the bruises of the children she asked Martinez many questions as to just how it all came about, gently rebuking him for his carelessness in not observing the approach of the soldiers. He gave her as clear and full account as could be expected of a frightened boy of six years. Still sobbing, little Juanita helped what she could by prompting her brother where he was about to forget any of the particulars.

Soon both of the grandfathers and grandmothers of the children had come to the little home and, though much alarmed, they helped the wife in planning an effort for the release of Juan. They talked until late, her mother spending the night with her, but daylight found them with no definite plan fixed upon. Many a time during that night of awful suspense Alicia had appealed to the Virgin Mary for help and guidance, but the morning found her more perplexed, if possible, than she had been the previous night. Her father and

father-in-law were ready to go into Trinidad and do what they could, but she pronounced that not only unwise but dangerous, for some of the Spanish were only too anxious to learn their whereabouts and to find some excuse for arresting them. Finally it was agreed that she and Juan's mother, though it took much pleading on their part to secure the consent of the others, should go to Trinidad and see what could be done.

Poor little Juanita was disconsolate indeed when she found her mamma must leave her even for one day. But how were the two women to reach the city? The distance was about eight miles, and the so-called road hardly more than a trail. Neither of them knew much of horseback riding, though the older had had some experience years before. She was now too old to walk that distance, so it was decided that she should ride one of the gentler ponies, while Alicia determined to walk.

In the meantime Juan was not idle. Though exhausted for the want of sleep the night before and for lack of food, he began early in the morning urging the guard to send some one to the commander of the post to say that the prisoner was anxious to be brought to trial for his offense. This failing, he begged that he might see the officer whom he had struck, but was told that the officer had left early that morning on a steamer for Cienfuegos, not to return for several days, and that

nothing could be done until his return. This was indeed discouraging.

About noon the two weary, distressed women reached the barracks and begged that they might see Juan, but they were harshly refused the privilege. Then they made an effort to get to see the commander of the post, but to no purpose. Hardly knowing what to do, they went on into the city and to a merchant with whom Juan had had much dealing. They asked his advice and active help, but he was too uneasy about his own safety, as some Spanish merchants had more than once insinuated that he was not in hearty sympathy with Spanish authority. He had been among the Cubans who were not very enthusiastic over the few concessions promised Cuba by the Spanish government at the close of the "Ten Years War" a few months before.

The women next went to the *acalde* (the mayor) of the city and begged him to assist them. He promised to see what could be done, but seemed to have been disposed to dismiss the matter from his mind so soon as they were gone had not his interest in the case been aroused by a man who was visiting him at the hour the women called. The women had both noticed that the stranger had watched them very closely so long as they remained in the office of the *acalde*, and, after they had passed out of the city hall, Alicia, suddenly looking back, dis-

covered him watching them from a window. She involuntarily shivered, and her mother-in-law asked what was the matter. She gave an indefinite answer and began talking about Juan. She could not afford to reveal to the distressed mother the new terror which had suddenly taken fast hold upon her. She had recognized in the man, with his fine Castillian features and sharp, treacherous eye, a Spaniard who had at one time, in Havana, sought her hand in marriage. She remembered with a shudder what deep hate he had manifested toward "that country Cuban," as he sarcastically called Juan Olivera, who was preferred before him.

Alicia now felt as never before that something must be done, and that immediately. By the time they had reached the market-place, Alicia's new plan was perfected in her mind. She proposed that they go into the market and buy something to eat both for themselves and Juan. When the other expressed a doubt as to their succeeding in getting anything conveyed to Juan, she replied with a sort of desperation that nearly always bears fruit: "Well, mother, we will try." Several purchases were made. Among them was a loaf of very stale bread. The trader was evidently surprised but delighted to make that sale, and the mother-in-law, as soon as they had seated themselves in a little park not far from the market, asked why such a purchase

was made. "Why, mother," came the reply, "those hungry Spaniards may spare this loaf because it is unfit to eat, and poor, dear Juan will therefore get it. I do hope and pray the good 'mother' that it will be the only part of this food that will be given to him."

Before the other could express her astonishment, Alicia had taken her little prayer-book from her bosom, and tearing out a fly-leaf, began scratching on it with a pin. These were the lines dimly traced: "Dearest, I have seen Señor Alonzo Menendez here in Trinidad. He knows of your imprisonment. The old hate is on his face and revenge is in his eye. I have done all I can for you, but to no purpose. Escape, my dear! Upon thy life, escape this very night.—*Alicia.*" Slightly raising a crust on the stale loaf, she skillfully slipped the scrap of paper underneath it, so far that it was hidden. The mother-in-law asked no question, but her lips quivered as she breathed a prayer to the "good mother" for the safe delivery of that little message.

After assisting the mother to mount, Alicia hurried on in front of the horse. They must reach home as soon as possible. That was part of the plan that had come to her like an inspiration. At the barracks they made another effort to get to see the prisoner, but though the old mother plead with tears it was to no purpose. When Alicia saw that the officer was growing

weary of their importunity and would be glad enough to get rid of them, she handed him the lunch they had prepared and asked him to please convey it to the prisoner. At the same moment she dropped a coin into his hand. He actually bowed to her, and promised that the lunch should be delivered. Thanking him she immediately left the barracks and walked on behind the horse on which her mother-in-law rode.

As they ascended the hill, she turned to look back on the camp, and with a suppressed shriek, she rushed by the horse and called to the rider to hurry on. The glance over her shoulder had been sufficient to satisfy her that the haughty, treacherous Alonzo was at that moment entering the barracks. Oh, how she prayed! She became so desperate in her longings for help that she was almost ready to pray like the Protestants, direct to God, but she checked the feeling.

Alicia forgot her weariness of body, and would not hear to the mother dismounting to let her ride some. It was not yet sundown when they reached the village. The curious villagers gathered about them to inquire what success they had had. They were answered, "None, so far as human eye can see." Many persons kindly offered to be of what service they could to the distressed family. Thanking them from down deep in

her heart, Alicia hurried on to her humble now desolate home.

Little Juanita was so happy to see her mamma again that for the moment she forgot about the absence of her papa; then, with her arms lovingly clinging to her mother's neck, she began asking: "Mamma, where is papa? Why didn't you bring papa? You said you would. Oh, I want my papa, my own dear papa!" she began sobbing on her mother's shoulder. The weary, discouraged, haunted mother could not stand this. She completely broke down, weeping as freely as the child. The grandparents, all of whom were there, were too heartbroken and distressed themselves to console the child or its mother. Martinez crept up to his mother's side and put his manly little arms lovingly about her waist.

Juanita sobbed herself to sleep, her mother grew strangely calm, and that determined look, which for awhile had deserted her, came back, and, gently loosing herself from the embrace of Martinez, she tenderly laid Juanita on the bed, whispering: "You dear, sweet little namesake of him who *must* be free!"

CHAPTER III.

The officer of the guard, regardless of his promise to Alicia, opened the lunch, and proceeded to appropriate the oranges and the other fruits that he found. Not being hungry for bread and meat, he handed them to a soldier, telling him that, if he wanted to, he might throw them to the "Cuban dog." The soldier, with a fiendish grin, took them and began to munch away on them. Then the officer, with a mock dignity, said: "Knave, I command thee in the name of her majesty, the Queen Regent, proceed to feed the said dog!" The soldier, still eating, carelessly and slowly walked away toward the guard-house, but was careful to appropriate all that was worth appropriating.

When the guard-house was reached, he handed the stale bread to the guard, saying with a great show of dignity: "Help thyself, there is a feast prepared for thy own dear self by the loving and beautiful hands of the señora herself." The bantered guard flung the bread aside, but the other cried out: "The sergeant said for you to feed it to the 'Cuban dog.'" The guard picked the bread up out of the dirt, and, holding it lightly between finger and thumb as if afraid that it

would soil his hand, and, scanning it closely, said: "Yes, I guess that is about good enough for a 'Cuban dog.' Why I do believe that mice have been building a nest under the crust. See, here is some of the old paper they used for the purpose;" and he pulled at the piece of paper which the trembling, praying Alicia had put there.

At that moment he looked in the direction of where the officer of the guard stood, and seeing two men in citizen's clothes approach, he forgot about the paper, and carelessly tossed the bread through a small opening into where Juan sat, exclaiming "There, Fido, is your dinner!" Juan kicked it aside. Hungry as he was, he did not think himself equal to the task of eating what a Spanish soldier would not have.

Sure enough, Alicia was right, Señor Alonzo had come to the barracks, and "on evil intent." He and one of the city officials approached the sergeant before he had disposed of all the fruit he had appropriated. After a few questions as to the Cuban prisoner, they were guided to the headquarters of the commander of the post, and Alonzo held a lengthy consultation with the commander. Then the city official was called in. It was agreed that he prisoner thrown into the guard-house for the offense of the day before was a more important personage than had been thought, and that he

should be transferred to more secure quarters. This the commander promised to have done, the city official agreeing to provide the quarters in the city prison of which he had charge.


With the usual salutations, Señor Alonzo and his friend departed. As they passed out of the barracks, Alonzo gave his fine mustache an extra twirl and cast a satisfied look in the direction of the guard-house. After further confidential talk with the city official, he went to the hotel where he was stopping, and took plenty of time to gloat over his prospects of revenge. His thoughts were probably about as follows: "I have had to wait a long time, but now I shall have the joy of making Senor Alicia pay for the insult she complacently administered to me by preferring the hand of that rustic Cuban to my own. By the Holy Virgin, she seems to have lost but little of her beauty, in spite of years and hardships. Though worn with fatigue and torn by anxiety of mind, I could see much of the charm that used to be hers."

While this soliloquy was in progress, something was happening at the guard-house in the barracks. Juan had kicked the stale bread aside in disgust, but the gnawing hunger which was now becoming almost unbearable drove him to reach for the bread and to begin eating it. "May be," thought he, "I had better eat

this. Little do those miserable scoundrels care for me, and they may let me starve to death."

As he proceeded with his frugal meal, he encountered the piece of paper which had been put there by Alicia. Pulling it out, he thought to himself: "Here is the mice's nest of which I heard the guard speak." He tossed the paper aside, and continued with his eating which he was enjoying in spite of his disgust. When the bread was finished, he picked up the slip of paper, and began twirling it about his finger, when he happened to see some of the pin-scratches. Moving nearer the hole that admitted the light, he found that he could make out the writing. When he had finished the reading, his whole frame shook with excitement, and his teeth came together in a way to indicate a firm but desperate resolve. He sat a good while in the same position. He was thinking, planning.

While he was awaiting the darkness to begin to put his plan into execution, he was surprised to have a Spanish officer come and speak to him through the small opening, and in kind tones. He even promised to have some food sent to the prisoner. Juan was more surprised when the food and some water came. While he ate he was wondering what all this could mean, when the truth slowly dawned upon him. He remembered the earnest pleadings of Alicia on that little paper, and



became more desperately determined to escape that very night.

When the longed-for darkness came, he began the work he had planned to do. It was removing the dirt of the earthen floor so as to allow him to pass out under the wall. He bitterly remembered that he had been called a dog, and, for the time being, he could but wish that he had some of the powers possessed by the dog. He had made but little progress at ten o'clock, and at that hour his work was brought to a sudden stop. He heard voices, and, peeping out through the small opening, he discovered that several persons were approaching. It was a squad of soldiers, headed by an officer.

The guard at the door was saluted, and then relieved. The officer came to the opening, speaking to Juan in very pleasant tones, telling him that they had come to move him to more pleasant quarters, and that his case would be considered on the morrow. In a moment, Juan read the whole design, and knew it was the treacherous work of Alonzo. "More pleasant quarters, indeed!" He was glad the starlight was not sufficient to enable them to see his loathing.

Imagining that they had been believed, and to allay all suspicion on the part of Juan, they did not manacle him. It was very much desired that he be transferred to the city prison so quietly that the citizens would not

know of it. When he started to walk, he found his legs stiff and cramped and, asking the officer to excuse him a moment, proceeded to rub them vigorously with his hands. Then, with an officer walking by his side, and even deigning to assist him by holding his arm, they quietly passed out of the barracks enclosure and on toward the city. There was only starlight, and it made dim by the fog that was coming up from the sea. Juan knew every foot of the way, for he had passed along it a thousand times.

The moment they passed into the edge of the fog, he suddenly leaped from the narrow road, down a steep bank, dragging the officer with him for the double purpose of protecting himself from the fire of the soldiers and for disabling the officer. The last was done by dashing him against the rocks, and so stunning the officer that it was easy to loose himself from his grasp.

It was all the work of only a moment, and now, with a fleetness that astonished even himself, he ran across the deep valley and began to ascend the hill beyond. So soon as the soldiers recovered from their surprise and found that the officer was not still clinging to the prisoner—rather to him who had been a prisoner—they did not wait longer for a command, but began firing at him, guided by the noise he made in running. So accurate was their aim that the balls whizzed by his ears, one piercing his hat. He took shelter behind a great

stone long enough to catch his breath after the almost superhuman effort and to think a moment as to the best plan for further progress.

The shooting had aroused all of the soldiers at the barracks, and all was confusion. Horses had broken away from their fastenings, and were running about, frightened by the firing and yelling. The officer had recovered himself and was commanding the soldiers to give pursuit, and Juan could hear them crossing the little valley above and below where he had crossed it. They were making a determined effort to cut off his retreat. Then the officer ran back to the barracks and gave direction to the soldiers who were mounting and making off around the hill so as to intercept him if those on foot should fail.

With a moment's thought Juan determined upon a bold scheme. He as quietly as possible, and with good speed, descended by the way he had come. He successfully reached the road, and was just in the act of leaping up the steep bank beyond it, when he was grasped by a pair of strong arms. A desperate struggle ensued, and his assailant was yelling for help. With another almost superhuman effort, he tore the arms of his would-be captor away from their hold and, hurling their owner violently down the embankment below the road, dashed up the hill on the opposite side. He was not a second too soon, for the now desperate officer who

had let him escape was close upon him, and gave orders to the soldiers to fire, and they were not slow in obeying, as Juan could tell by the whistling balls. Fortunately it was but a few yards to the top of the hill, and once on top he was quickly out of range. By the time the pursuers reached the top of the ridge, he was out of hearing, and they gave up that method of pursuit.

So soon as Juan thought it was safe to do so, he turned in the direction of his home, for he felt that he must reach that place before soldiers could be sent there. Some two miles from the barracks he ventured to get into the road, as progress through the underbrush, much of it armed by terrible thorns, was necessarily slow. Very soon he heard a horse coming behind him. Quickly secreting himself by the roadside, he soon discovered the horse was without rider. He gave a low whistle, and to his great joy, the horse turned his head and gave a subdued neigh that Juan would have recognized anywhere. It was his own good horse which, it seems, had broken loose during the confusion at the camp and was now making its way homeward.

Soon the master was on the back of his steed, and was glad enough for a ride, for he was well-nigh exhausted. It was now about midnight, and the moon was rising. The horse being fresh and thoroughly familiar with the road, rapid progress was easy.

CHAPTER IV.

Before one o'clock in the morning, Juan was at his own door. He had so quietly turned his horse into the corral that the little company gathered in the little hut had not heard him. Stealing quietly to the door, he glanced through a crack, and saw the familiar faces of his wife, his father and mother, and her father and mother. Then he gave the gentle knock which his wife instantly recognized, sprang up, opened the door, and threw her arms around his neck. Quickly he placed his hand upon her mouth to smother the exclamation she was about to utter. Closing the door, he cautioned them to be very quiet, saying that none of the villagers must know of his coming, and that he must be gone before daylight.

In a few minutes he had given the eager listeners a sketch of his escape, merely touching on the last scuffle, involuntarily giving his wife an inquiring look at the moment that incident was reached. She understood all, and barely stifled an exclamation. Alicia not only did not oppose his leaving before daylight, but nervously hastened his departure. She had well understood that he believed that the man who had seized him in the dark was none other than Alonzo Menendez, and

that was enough to convince her that a murderous plot had been made. If only the adventure with the Spanish soldiers had been all, then a few days hiding out would be all that would be necessary, but that was not all.

Alicia had hoped and prayed for her husband's escape that very night, and had hurried home on purpose to prepare for his flight, and now had all things in readiness. She had prepared provisions sufficient for several days. Fortunately he had some money on hand. So at about three o'clock he bade them all good-by, promising to return just as soon as it was safe for him to do so.

They had been tempted to awaken the children, but a second thought convinced them that it would be unwise to do so. When the father stooped down and kissed the innocent, sleeping ones, little Juanita murmured in her sleep: "I want my papa, my own dear papa." Brushing a tear from his manly cheek, Juan hurried out of the hut, and, upon his faithful steed which a good providence had given back to him so opportunely, he was soon hurrying away in the direction of Santo Domingo.

Naturally there was much excitement in the Spanish barracks and in the city of Trinidad. The citizens not being allowed to know the cause of the firing were only

the more exercised. Alonzo had specially urged that the matter of Juan's transfer to the city prison be kept a profound secret. It seems that he and the city official who had charge of the prison were at a certain hour to meet the soldiers bringing Juan on the outskirts of the city. They had reached the point before the firing, and the moment it began Alonzo had divined the cause and had hurried away toward the camp just in time to intercept Juan at the road.

Early next morning he was at the barracks, and there were some hot words between him and the officer who had let Juan escape. The officer plead that Alonzo himself was the occasion of the escape, because but for his caution for secrecy and the thorough deceiving of the prisoner, the prisoner would have been manacled. Alonzo urged pursuit, but the commander was loath to proceed further with a matter of so little moment to him and that had been attended, so far, with so little that was creditable to him; but the persistent persecutor prevailed, and by sunup a squad of twenty-five soldiers, headed by a captain, was on the way to the village where the Oliveras lived. Alonzo would have gone, but he was still anxious to conceal from Alicia the part he was performing.

The old people remained the balance of the night with Alicia. When Martinez awoke, he surprised his

mother by asking where his papa was and insisting that his papa kissed him and Juanita as they lay in bed. His mother assured him that he had been dreaming, and she was right.

When the soldiers rode into the little village the people were greatly excited. None of them knew where the younger Olivera was. The men questioned said they had not seen him in two days. His house was pointed out, and when Martinez and Juanita saw the soldiers riding up, they ran to their mother in great fright, and Juanita cried so vigorously that her mother was not able to hear the captain, and was only too glad when he turned away in disgust. He did not go, however, until he had left a written order from the commander of the post at Trinidad for Señor Juan Olivera to appear at his headquarters.

Juan went to the neighborhood of San Marcos, some ten miles southwest from Santo Domingo. It was a section noted for its sugar-cane plantations and sugar factories. He purposely avoided the cities of Santa Clara and Santo Domingo, and kept away from the railroads. He did not know how much Alonzo Menendez was going to do to carry out his revengeful intent and thought it best to be careful for some time to come.

He could not be idle. At first, he secured employment as a common laborer on a plantation, but his skill

and industry soon brought him into notice, and ere long he was employed by Señor Marcos Gonzalez to superintend the erection of a large factory for the manufacture of sugar. When the factory was completed, Señor Gonzalez was so pleased with Juan that he employed him to superintend the running of the factory, not only promising him a good salary, but a good home for himself and family. Furthermore, from what Juan had told him of his father and father-in-law, he felt that he would need both of them, the first to look after his plantation, and the latter to take charge of his supply store.

As it was some time until the sugar-cane would be ready for the mill, Juan determined to go home for the purpose of removing his family and other relatives. He felt very happy as he approached that mountain village, after an absence of over seven months. When he walked into his humble home, it can hardly be said that he was the happiest person in that home. Martinez and Juanita were so full of joy that they did not know just what to do. He found all well and ready to gladly fall in with his plans.

Things had gone pleasantly for most of the time during his absence. Alicia had heard of the presence in the village of a Spaniard the description of whom suited well to Alonzo. This stranger had been seen there

twice. This had made her feel uneasy, and caused her to be doubly glad at the thought of getting away, and she now began preparations with alacrity. In a few weeks, all things were ready for the move.

During Juan's absence, his father and Señor Martinez had kept the farming and gardening interests moving on. Now their possessions in the community amounted to considerable. Indeed, they had prospered. Better prices were secured for what now had to be sold, everything except their clothing, the lighter furniture, and pack-horses and Juan's saddle-horse, being disposed of. Bidding their friends good-by—they had made some true friends among the illiterate but sturdy mountaineers—they departed.

When a level part of the country where wheeled vehicles could be used was reached, Juan traded their pack-train for three yoke of oxen and as many carts. In this he had an eye to business, for the oxen and carts would be in good demand at the plantation, while the pack-horses would not be needed.

While Martinez and Juanita had greatly enjoyed the ride in the large baskets, they were happy to make the change to the carts. The change was certainly much better for the women of the party. The progress was slow, but the rainy season being over, the weather was delightful, and all greatly enjoyed camping out.

CHAPTER V.

When the new home was reached, all parties and especially the children were delighted. The neat little brick cottage that was to be the home of Juan and his family was in strong contrast to the palm-bark hut in which they had been living. All the factory buildings were bright and new, being trimmed in a pleasant sky-blue. The tall chimney (about two hundred feet in height) was greatly admired by the children, it being the tallest human structure they had ever seen. They were struck with wonder at the great machinery, the ponderous wheels and the great engine, and longed to see the machinery in motion.

All the buildings, the factory, supply-store, quarters for the employees and their families were inclosed in a strong wall, the inclosure covering about forty acres. This gave the children large scope for their frolics. When the great crowd of laborers moved into their quarters, it made a town of several hundred inhabitants, and it was soon a busy town, for the work of gathering the juicy sugar-cane had begun, and a few days later the wheels of the mill began to move. This last was not enjoyed by the children as much as they had imagined it would be. It seemed to them that the great

mill itself was moving off, and might run over them, but they soon became so accustomed to it that they enjoyed the whirr of the machinery as it went on day and night.

Their father took them through the factory, showing them how the sugar-cane was moved up as if on the hollow back of a mighty monster which could carry twenty of the big cart-loads at one time, until the cane reached the two immense fluted beams which unmercifully broke it into many pieces. Then how it went through between the great, smooth beams, and was so thoroughly squeezed that what remained of it was so dry that a few days later it was used as fuel.

They saw how the sweet juice, in a big stream, was carried into big kettles, or vats, holding hundreds of gallons, and there heated so as to have the filth skimmed off. Then how it passed on through a succession of great evaporators, becoming first a rich-colored syrup, and at last a brown sugar. Every man in the factory, and there were light-complexioned and tan-colored Cubans, Chinese, negroes, and mulattoes, seemed to have his own work, and had no time to bother about any one else's business. (A little more of that kind of thing in the big world would be a happy idea.) Why, the toilers hardly had time to smile at the wonder-struck boy and girl who were clinging to their father's hand.

When they reached the place where the sugar was being packed in bags for shipment, their father allowed them to eat as much as they wanted, and that was not near as much as they had imagined they could eat. They were amused at what shocks some sensitive Americans, namely, the packing of the sugar in the bags by negroes who get in on it with their naked feet.

We have not time to tell of all the things of interest they saw that day. But there was something else in store for them, and they enjoyed it to the full. This time their grandfather Olivera was their protector and guide. He had promised them a treat several days before it came, and they had been imagining all sorts of things about what they were to do and see.

The day came, and they were cosily packed in by grandfather in that rudely constructed vehicle called the volante, which consists of two low wheels connected by a clumsy axletree, with two long, limber pieces of wood so placed in the axletree as to make shafts and at the same time make a place on which the rude bed of the vehicle is fastened. Away the horse went, and up and down grandpapa and the delighted, laughing children swung.

They were soon out on the great sugar-cane plantation and saw the merry, singing laborers. All the field-

hands, except the overseers, were negroes—men, women and children—and how fast they seemed to work! Some of them went along slashing down the cane and cutting off much of the top, and others followed and stripped off the blades from the stalks, while still others came with ox-carts with frames as high as the heads of the men standing in them and gathered up the heaps of stripped cane and loaded their carts to the top of their frames.

When the cart was loaded with as much cane as four American horses would draw, the driver, either mounted on top of the high load or walking beside the oxen, drove away toward the factory, two large oxen easily drawing the load by a yoke fastened on their necks and to their horns, a padded piece passing over their foreheads. Those oxen pull with their heads instead of their shoulders. Thus they become, like some people I have seen, very stiff-necked. They are driven with small ropes tied in rings fastened in their noses. Sometimes no rings are used, but the ropes are passed directly through the holes made between the nostrils. Oxen are not the only beings in the world that are led around by the nose.

The children enjoyed all of the sights and the fresh, invigorating winter air, and enthusiastically pronounced the half day afield with grandpapa one of the happiest of their lives.


A sight of unending interest and amusement to them was in the negro quarters. It was the scene presented at "the nursery" where, during the day, nearly one hundred negro babies, from about four years old down to the little, fat crawler, romped, laughed, and cried. There was not as much crying as there was laughing. Generally all of the children were stark naked, and most of them were as fat as guinea-pigs. They were indeed a jolly "crew." The two or three old negroes who looked after them while their mothers were in the field had plenty to do. What a rush and scramble there was at night when their mammas came! Usually the mothers knew their own, and the babies rarely made a mistake as to the identity of their mothers. Joyous as were the scenes often presented, there was, in connection with these babies that which was a source of pain to Alicia and others. Many of the babies, indeed the most of them, were illegitimate children.

Juan was delighted to find that Martinez took a deeper interest in the growing cane and the whirling machinery than that caused by an idle curiosity and the love of the novel. He was constantly asking his father as to the hōws and wherefores of things, and he usually remembered what was told him in reply to his questions. And Juanita, though two years younger than her brother and not yet five years of age, manifested an intelligent interest in such things.

The father and mother had many serious talks as to what they should do for their children. The mother was their only teacher in books, and was doing her work with diligence and intelligence. It was not all play, by any means, with Martinez and Juanita, as they could testify. Martinez could read quite well, and Juanita was learning to do so by spelling out all the hard words.

Señor Gonzalez, having spent eight years in the United States, was well educated and took great interest in the children, though he was still a bachelor. He encouraged the father and mother in their determination to give the children a good education. The parents began to be happy in the prospect that they were going to be able to do so. In closing out his little business at the mountain village, Juan was delighted to find that their savings amounted to considerable, and Gonzalez had now put these, with the savings of his father and father-in-law, into his business, and was paying them a good interest for the use of the money, besides he was to allow them a small per centum of the gains of the business, if there should be any.

The young father and mother were very happy, and had begun to feel that their trials and sorrows were mostly over. In this, like many another happy married couple, they were to find that they were mistaken. Just when their life promised to be the brightest, a shadow, a very dark shadow, passed over it.



One day as Juanita was playing near the office of Señor Gonzalez, where he had taken great pains to construct a "play-house" for her, a neatly dressed and rather handsome Spaniard passed into the office. As he walked up the steps she looked up into his face, and, had she been older, she might have noticed that he gave a start. He was there as the representative of a steamer line to see Gonzalez about rates for shipping sugar to various points along the southern coasts of Cuba.

When he came out of the office Juanita was so busy with her "playthings" that she did not notice his approach until he stooped and put his hands on her long, dark and beautiful hair. She started with a quick cry of surprise, but when he smiled pleasantly, she was reassured and allowed him to take her hand into his. But that night she wondered why mamma should turn so pale when she artlessly said, "Mamma, a strange man asked me to-day if my name was Alicia, and when I told him that it was not, he said I was just the picture of a little Alicia he used to know when he was a little boy."

CHAPTER VI.

On the evening following little Juanita's adventure with the handsome Spanish señor, Juan Olivera and his wife, when the children were asleep, had a long and serious conversation. They both felt sure that the man of whom Juanita had told them was none other than the same, wicked, vengeful Alonzo. Both, too, were agreed that if he learned of their whereabouts he would not rest until he had given them trouble. As to how serious the trouble no human being could divine. Of one thing they, especially Juan, felt assured, and that was that the Spaniard would find no helper in his wicked schemes in Señor Gonzalez, for that person heartily despised the Spanish, and when his business required him to have any dealings with them, he did it in a dignified and reserved manner.

The next day, while in conversation with Gonzalez, Juan incidentally learned that the visitor of the day before was Señor Alonzo Menendez, one of the proprietors of the Menendez coast steamer line, and that he was there to make special offers as to freight-rates on sugar. Further, that this was the first time he had ever seen this member of the company. Then Juan, as if merely interested in the business matter, asked Gonzalez if he

had been able to secure satisfactory rates. "Yes," replied the other, "but the company is so greedy and unreliable that I do not know how long these special rates will continue."

The season for sugar-making being ended, the mill stopped for the first time after the season opened, so perfectly had the machinery worked. While the señors Olivera and Martinez had more leisure, they still had plenty to do. The mill had hardly stopped when Gonzalez was stricken down with malarial, or Cuban, fever. His home was with his mother, for whom he had built a beautiful country residence at the end of an avenue made by two rows of tall royal palms, and about a mile from the main entrance to the factory inclosure.

This sickness threw greater responsibility upon Juan, taking him away from home now and then. Twice he had had to visit Cienfuegos, an important seaport of the south coast. Neither he nor Alicia liked this, but of course they made no complaint. Juan was very careful when in the city or on the railroad. He did not believe Alonzo Menendez would recognize him, never having met him except in that encounter in the dark. Once, while seeing to some freight on the Cienfuegos wharf, Juan felt sure that he saw Alonzo leaning over the deck-railing of one of the company's steamers.

The reader may rest assured that Gonzalez had the

best attention during his illness. All of the Oliveras and the Martinezes vied with each other in their attentions to him, Martinez and Juanita joyfully doing their part in carrying him flowers gathered by themselves and others. Then, when he was convalescent, they carried such delicacies as were calculated to tempt his not fast returning appetite. Besides, they insisted on serving him in other ways, making themselves so useful and pleasant that he was always glad to see them come. His mother could hardly keep from feeling a little jealous when she would come into his room and find Juanita "minding" the flies, while Martinez was reading to her son, still she was very fond of the children.

When they were gone, she remarked to her son, "You will spoil Martinez by having him to read to you."

"Why, mother! he is not the kind to be spoiled. He was so anxious to do something for me that I asked him to read to me. I did it just to please him, and, do you know, I enjoy it ever so much? He certainly reads well for a lad of seven, but that is not so strange when he has such a teacher. Mother," and there was a touch of mischief in his eye, and yet he immediately grew serious, "if I could find just such a woman as that same Señora Alicia Olivera I do believe, if you would allow me, and if she were willing, I would marry."

"Tut, tut! my son Marcos, that 'if you would allow

me' is just some pretty little flattery you are throwing at your old *madre*." She continued: "But do you ever have a serious thought on the subject of matrimony?"

"Yes, indeed, I do; at least, I have had such thoughts since my sickness."

"Oh, you wicked boy! I suppose you are dissatisfied with your nurses."

"Oh, no; that is not it, *madre mia* [mother mine], I have just had more time to think, as I have lain here. Now that Juan Olivera is attending to my business affairs so splendidly—why, he is doing better than I could—when I get well I am going to take more time to *think*, and it is no telling what will happen."

"May be you will go to Havana and hunt up that beautiful, rich Spanish señorita of whom I have heard you speak."

"Nay, nay, *madre mia*, you know I am not in favor of any *Spanish* alliances. First of all, it is *Cuba libre* with me, but if we can not have free Cuba—independent Cuba—then I am in favor of annexation to the United States."

"Oh, the New York 'Miss' with whom you have been corresponding since you were in college there, is the one of whom you are thinking."

"There, mother, you have me, and I plead guilty and

‘ask the mercy of the court,’ as they say in the United States. But, before I forget it, I want to tell you of something of which I am now reminded by your reference to the Spanish señorita. Just before the mill stopped for the season a representative of the Menendez steamer line came into my office on business for that company. It was none other than the brother of that Spanish señorita. It may be that it was all my imagination, but it seemed to me that he was very much disconcerted when he first came in. I wondered and wondered, after he was gone, what could have been the cause of his embarrassment. Surely he could not have heard that I was an admirer of his sister, and for that reason have been embarrassed.”

“I hope not, for I know it costs you much to have even business dealings with the Spanish, and I hope that no other occasion of embarrassment will arise. But, *hijo mio* [my son], you are talking too much to-day. The doctor, you know, has turned you over to me—very kind of him—and I command you to be silent.” Stooping, she imprinted a kiss on each of his pale cheeks and walked out of the room. But he disobeyed her immediately, for, as his eyes followed her noble form, he exclaimed, “The Holy Virgin be praised for such a mother!”

But "another occasion of embarrassment" did arise, though somewhat different from what the mother feared. It was not immediately communicated to Gonzalez, for he was not thought to be well enough to be burdened with business affairs, especially unpleasant complications. Juan, except that he was helped by the ever-helpful Alicia, had to meet the difficulty alone. He had a letter from the agent of the Menendez company, at Cienfuegos, saying that company (hundreds of bags of Gonzalez's sugar had been placed on their wharf) had refused to carry any more sugar unless they were allowed a certain price which was a considerable advance on the rates that had been agreed upon. Very soon, letters began to pour in from merchants at Trinidad, Sancti Spiritus, Manzanillo, and Santiago de Cuba complaining because their orders for sugar had not been filled.

Against the warnings of his wife, Juan resolved to go to Cienfuegos immediately to see what could be done. There he was told by the agent of the Menendez company that he had positive orders from headquarters in Havana, and he must obey. Going to the wharf, Juan found that the sugar was being damaged. He had written the complaining merchants of the situation, asking them if they would be willing to pay half of the

advance in the freight-rates. Answers came from the Trinidad merchants saying they would cancel their orders rather than pay more freight, adding that other merchants who had ordered sugar from other manufacturers were required to pay only the usual rates.

This was sufficient to convince Juan of the truth of what he had already suspected; namely, that the company was discriminating against Señor M. Gonzalez. His mind was not long in reaching the conclusion as to the cause of the discrimination. Desperate as it might seem, he determined to go to the headquarters of the company at Havana; so the following morning he left on the early train, and reached Havana about dark that evening.

When the office of the company was opened the next morning, he was there and impatiently awaited the coming of a representative of the company. Finally, a fashionably dressed Spaniard entered, and when he went behind the desk, Juan faced him, and immediately told the object of his visit, explaining that he came to represent Gonzalez because of the serious sickness of that gentleman.

The Spaniard, nervously twirling his long mustache, listened, or pretended to listen, until Juan was through, then, with a proud shrug of the shoulders, replied that

they would not carry the sugar at any lower rates. Juan asked him if it had not been agreed that the sugar of Gonzalez would be carried for a certain price for the season. The other answered him in the affirmative, but sarcastically added, that rates were liable to change.

Juan had to struggle to regain his calm. The other noticed his agitation, and assumed a patronizing attitude. After a moment's hesitation, the Cuban quietly but deliberately said: "But merchants of Trinidad assure me that you have not changed rates with other shippers."

"Do you mean to insinuate that we are discriminating against Señor Gonzalez?" savagely asked the Spaniard.

"I mean just what I say, señor," coolly replied the Cuban. "It certainly does look like discrimination," he continued, "and discrimination, too, of the meanest sort; for your company waited until Gonzalez had placed hundreds of bags of sugar on your wharf at Cienfuegos, ready for shipment to fill orders for the same, then you suddenly raised your freight-charges."

The Spaniard, almost gnashing his teeth, thundered: "Can you, sir, *you* who seem to have encumbered yourself with the business of Señor Gonzalez, tell me why *you* think our company should want to discriminate against him?"

Juan noticed where the emphasis was placed, and knew that the man facing him had recognized him, and that thought, coupled with the many warnings Alicia had given him, made him hesitate for a moment, but it was for only a moment.

Duty to a kind and now sick employer had brought him there. He had come fully resolved to do his duty, though it should require him to "beard the lion in his den." He calmly answered, "Señor, if you please, you are not confining yourself to the business in hand. What *I* may or may not believe as to your reasons for discriminating against Señor Gonzalez is not the question. Please tell me plainly whether you mean to discriminate, then whether or not you mean to continue such discrimination. I am here on business, and have no time to swap words and insinuations with you or anyone else, if I were otherwise disposed to do so."

This was a genuine surprise to the haughty Spaniard, and demonstrated to even his proud self that the "Cuban dog" was his equal in a mental tussle, as he had proved himself, on a well-remembered night, to be his equal in muscular strength. He was "floored" and, angrily biting his lips, refused to talk further with Juan.

CHAPTER VII.

Juan coolly took the seat on which he was sitting when Alonzo entered. When an employee of the office, instructed by Alonzo, asked him why he waited longer, he replied that he wanted to see the elder Menendez. This was the greatest surprise yet—was the explosion of a bomb of large proportions “in the enemy’s camp.” This really alarmed Alonzo, and he was afraid that his feelings would be perceived by the other, for Juan was watching him closely. Turning his face away from Juan, he began to wonder what could be done to rid himself of the visitor whose coming he had so eagerly awaited. He well knew that his father was not in sympathy with any gratification of personal hate which jeopardized the business of the company. His father was too shrewd a business man not to see that it would be bad policy to discriminate against a prominent planter and manufacturer such as Gonzalez was.

While he was racking his brain for a plan to free himself from “the elephant on his hands,” he was alarmed by hearing his father’s voice from the pavement below. Juan saw his agitation and guessed its cause.

Alonzo arose, and facing Juan addressed him in a

poor imitation of politeness: "Excuse my impatience, señor; I misunderstood you, and became needlessly irritated. I assure you that it is not the intention of our company to discriminate against Señor Gonzalez. He is a gentleman highly respected by our company." When he saw that Juan was not disposed to renew the conversation, he continued: "And, señor, I assure you that we will have the matter at Cienfuegos looked into immediately. If need be, I will give it my personal attention. Of course we could not think of raising the rates on the goods which Señor Gonzalez had already laid down on our wharf, and we will give orders to our steamer which is to arrive there to-morrow, to take the sugar on this trip."

Juan still spoke not a word, but looked straight into the face of the Spaniard. The suspense was becoming oppressive. It was a new edition of "the cat playing with the mouse before devouring it." It was the cat allowing the mouse to do the playing before being devoured. Every moment Alonzo expected to hear the footsteps of his father ascending the stairway. A dying effort was made, when he turned to one of his clerks and said: "Please draw up an order for my signature, to the captain of our steamer, the 'Josefita,' asking him to be sure to take the sugar of Señor Gonzalez on this trip."

The clerk responded promptly, and Alonzo continued: "If you will be kind enough to wait a moment [as if Juan looked the least bit like he was going], I will put this paper in your hands, and you will have no further trouble." Juan's very soul loathed the fawning scoundrel.

Just as the paper was ready for signature, footsteps—the dreaded footsteps—were heard on the stairway. Alonzo nervously wrote "A. Menendez," and hurriedly folding the paper, handed it to Juan just at the moment his father entered. Juan faced the father and was just going to address him, when the now thoroughly humbled son put in with: "Father, this is Señor Olivera, the representative of our friend and customer, Señor M. Gonzalez. He has come to make some complaint as to the delay in the shipment of their sugar at Cienfuegos, and I have just handed him an order to the captain of our steamer which is to arrive there to-morrow to immediately have the goods of Señor Gonzalez put on board."

That was a rather lengthy introduction, but it was delivered with speed that was wonderful. Before it was finished, the father had greeted the visitor in a very cordial manner, and when his son had finished, expressed his regret for the delay and promised that such a thing should not occur again if it could be possibly avoided.

He asked of Gonzalez, and when learning of his sickness expressed much regret. Juan thanked him and told him that Gonzalez was convalescent.

The father asked him if there was anything else they could do for him, when he saw that Juan hesitated.

Holding out the paper toward the old gentleman, he said, "If you please, Señor Menendez, I am a stranger to the captain here named, and as I want to avoid the least further delay, I wish you would also sign this paper."


"Of course," replied the other, "though my son's signature is entirely sufficient."

When he had signed, Juan thanked him, and with a significant look in the direction of Alonzo, "You must know I am a novice in a business like this, and you may regard me over particular, but I am acting for another and beg, for that reason, to trouble you a little further. The sugar of which we speak was placed on your wharf over two weeks ago, and should have been taken by your steamer which left there two weeks ago; indeed, your agent had it billed for that steamer. The customers of Señor Gonzalez, being much disappointed by the delay, are complaining, and I will do my best to satisfy them, but the sugar has been damaged, and I wish you to give me an order to your agent there to have the damages estimated and made good."

"Certainly, certainly, Señor Olivera," said the obedient Alonzo, and without waiting for his father's consent, ordered the clerk to draw up the paper and modestly handed it to his father for his signature, expecting to also sign it himself. To his chagrin, it was handed to Juan who folded it and placed it with the other order, almost smiling when he thought what an apt scholar the elder Menendez would regard him. Again thanking the father and cordially shaking his extended hand, he stiffly bowed to Alonzo and went out.

Before leaving the building, Juan had begun to plan for the accomplishment of the business in hand. He understood that Alonzo had not yet given over the struggle. This piece of deception practiced on his father was to prevent a collision with his father and to get a little more time. Juan returned to his hotel and took a nine o'clock breakfast, all the time earnestly studying the situation. He knew Alonzo was in a desperate strait and would resort to desperate measures to attain the end desired.

Juan visited several places in the city to see after the interest of Gonzalez, and soon became conscious that his movements were being observed. The agent who had been chosen for this was a dirty, sneaking, discharged Spanish soldier. Wherever he went Juan could see that



man who pretended to be selling some toys and cheap jewelry.

Alonzo felt sure that Juan expected to take the early morning train for Cienfuegos. This left Regla, across the bay, about daylight. To reach this train he would have to be at the wharf at least a half-hour before day. The way from his hotel to the wharf was a dark and lonely one, and would give good opportunity for the agents of Alonzo to carry out any plan that person might have in view. It would be easy to prevent Juan from reaching that early train, and thus throw him too late to reach Cienfuegos before the departure of the steamer.

Juan remembered that his bold course had proven a success so far, and determined to continue it. In a few hours a train would leave the city for Batabano, a port thirty miles distant on the south coast. This train was to connect with the steamer before its departure for Cienfuegos. Though he would probably have Alonzo as a traveling-companion, he determined to take that train and reach Cienfuegos by passage on the "Josefita." As it is no occasion of remark for a Cuban to carry a machete (a short, heavy sword), he purchased one and buckled it around him for an emergency.

He was early at the station and purchased a second-class ticket that he might not be observed by Alonzo,

who would, of course, travel first-class. Before entering the station, he had skillfully eluded the discharged Spanish soldier by entering the great market near by, and, instead of passing on through, he came out on the same side just as soon as the soldier entered, so he felt sure that his reaching the train was unobserved by his enemies.

Just before the train started, he saw Alonzo enter the first-class coach just in the rear of where he sat. It was easy to see that the Spaniard did not suspect that he was so near his hated antagonist. This was a little bolder stroke than he expected.

At Batabano it was easy for Juan to pass out unobserved through the crowd. Hurrying to the wharf, he immediately went on board the "Josefita," and took position on the outside deck within earshot of the captain's office. Fortunately it was on the seaward side of the ship. Pulling his hat well down over his face, he awaited developments.

Very soon he discovered that a conversation was being carried on in that office, but at first the tones were so low that he could not tell the character of the conversation, but by and by the speakers became excited, seeming to be seriously differing. It was easy then to discover that one of the speakers was Alonzo and he was

doing what he could to secure a promise from the captain that he would not take the goods.

"But," said the captain, "I have but little loading as yet, and what kind of a showing can I make to the other proprietors of the line? Besides, that representative of Gonzalez will be there with the order of which you tell me, and will insist that I take the sugar."

"Never do you mind," said Alonzo, "there are many chances to one against his ever getting there with the order, and, if he does, it will not be until day after tomorrow and you will be gone ere that. There are several ways to prevent his taking the early train in the morning at Regla. Trust that to me. His every movement is being watched in Havana to-day," and then Alonzo lowered his voice so that no more was heard by one eager listener.

When darkness came on, Juan freely mixed with the large crowd of second-cabin passengers. He knew his enemy had returned to Havana to have his plans for the early morning carried out, and there was a sense of security felt in his absence, and a joy at the thought of how that treacherous Spaniard would be disappointed when he and his agents found their game had flown. His heart went up in devout gratitude to the "Holy Mother" for his present escape from their clutches.

There were no sleeping-accommodations for the sec-

ond-class passengers. They were allowed to sit around in the midst of the freight on the lower deck. Some of them stretched themselves on the dirty floor. There was one pleasant feature: they would not be asked any questions until called upon to pay their fare the next morning. Juan stole up to the upper deck, and took a chair near the railing on one side of the ship. At first he took no interest in the conversation that was going on near by in a group of passengers and some of the officers of the ship, but when the barracks at Trinidad were spoken of, he gave attention, and found that some one was telling of the escape of himself on the memorable night more than a year before. To his alarm, he saw by the dim light of the lantern swinging near where the steps descended to the second cabin that the speaker was none other than the Spanish officer who had undertaken the transfer of himself to the city prison.

Juan did not want to hear more, but he did not dare to change his position at that moment. So he heard the story through, and felt some relief when the officer and the others joined in a hearty laugh over the incident. When the company retired Juan had time to think on the situation and to remember the dear, anxious wife and the children. Before leaving Cienfuegos he had written Alicia that some business was so urgent it might claim his attention for several days. He had written

Gonzalez as cheerful a letter as he could under the circumstances, and with just as little business as reasonable.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sometime about midnight Juan fell into a doze, from which he awoke with a start, for he had been dreaming that he was suddenly confronted by the Spanish officer whom he had handled so unceremoniously at Trinidad. When he slept again the sleep was accompanied by more happy visions. His high ambitions for the training of Martinez and Juanita were accomplished, and, happy thought, it was now Cuba libre!

While the other passengers were taking their early coffee, he hunted up the purser and quietly paid his fare, at the same time managing to register, as it is usually done, so that no one could read his name. When the ship ran along by the side of the wharf at Cienfuegos, which it did soon after sunup, he went ashore immediately and hunted up the agent of the Menendez company, giving him the order which was intended for him. Evidently that agent was surprised, but promised to look after it immediately after the ship had received its cargo. But Juan told him that it must be done instantly, for the sugar must make the first freight that should go on board. When the agent manifested some hesitation and doubts he was quickly shown the order intended for the captain of the steamer, and yielded.

It was agreed that they should look over the sugar, and if they should differ as to the amount of the damages which ought to be allowed, some disinterested parties should be called in. The work was done in short order, the amount of damages agreed upon, and the amount entered over their signatures on the back of the order.

Now came the more difficult and dangerous part of Juan's plan, and he felt the gravity of the situation. As to the Spanish officer from Trinidad, he was happy to find that personage did not recognize him. So soon as the captain of the "Josefita" came on shore Juan presented to him the order for the immediate shipment of the sugar. To say the captain was surprised is to put it mildly. For a moment he forgot himself, and asked, "How did this paper get here so early?" "I brought it," came the prompt reply. "Well, how in the name of the 'Holy Mother' did you get here?"

"Oh, for aught you know, I may have been murdered in Havana last night, and this is only my ghost talking to you. Anyway that paper is evidently tangible material, and that, captain, is what concerns you, and you will please act upon it immediately." Juan's quick eye had detected the shudder that had gone over the captain's frame when murder in Havana was spoken of, and determined to press the battle while he had the advantage.

The captain hesitated a moment, and then said, "I will see to this matter soon."

"Do so immediately, señor," came the decided and prompt reply.

"There may be something wrong about the paper, and I must first send a telegram to the headquarters of the company in Havana, and get further instructions."

"At the peril of losing your position, you will delay longer," said the other, and leaning forward he whispered in the captain's ear, "I know more of the conspiracy than you and the other one concerned dreamed." The proud officer shrank back like a cowardly cur.

Juan's bold plan worked, and he had the pleasure of seeing every bag of that sugar go on board before two o'clock in the afternoon. At forty minutes after two he was aboard the train bound for Cartagena, the nearest railway-station to San Marcos. Before midnight he was inside his own home where anxious hearts awaited him. He did not need to tell Alicia that happy success had attended his mission. She saw that much in his face. It seemed to him that he had been gone from home for a long time, so great was the strain to which he had been subjected.

The children were so happy that they did not grow sleepy that night as soon as their parents desired. Señor Gonzalez had been able to drive over, and had brought

each of them an illustrated book. This fact helped to keep them awake. Afterwhile their eyes grew heavy, and, though the battle was long and bravely contested, they succumbed, and papa and inamma could talk of the exciting experiences of the last few days, and consider plans for the future. Alicia was happy over the great success which had attended her husband's efforts, but her heart was heavy with terrible forebodings, and Juan had kindred feelings.

In a few days Señor Gonzalez was so far recovered that he could safely talk business. Juan told him so much of the late transactions as he had a right to know in connection with his business. Gonzalez was at a great loss to understand why the Menendez company should want to discriminate against him. Being in a confidential mood, he told about once having given considerable attention to the beautiful sister of Alonzo, and how his attentions ceased because of his utter abhorrence of the Spanish. But he could hardly think that such a thing could have led the company to treat him as they had done.

Gonzalez could but notice that Juan was somewhat agitated during this confidential disclosure. There was a struggle going on in Juan's mind, but after a moment's consideration as to what he should do, he frankly told Gonzalez that he was quite sure he knew the cause of the

discrimination, and then proceeded to recite the whole of his unhappy experiences with Alonzo Menendez. Gonzalez was greatly moved, and was pronounced in his indignation against such persecution and treachery. He thanked Juan again and again for the sacrifices and dangers which he had so generously endured in the interest of the business.

Juan replied with much emotion: "I have only performed my duty to you and the right, but I am certainly grateful that my labor is appreciated, and I want to say, though it costs me much to say it, the time has come that I should leave your employment. The interest of your business will suffer so long as I stay. You have been too good a friend to me and my family and other relatives for me to be willing that your interests should suffer on my account. I am sure that Alonzo Menendez does not intend to stop short of my dismissal from your employment."

"Why, Señor Olivera, you do not think me ungenerous, yea, mean enough to want to rid myself of an employee so worthy and honorable merely to gratify the spleen of a Spanish scoundrel."

"I am not judging you in that way at all," said Juan, "but remember that the interests of your estate are going to suffer so long as I stay with you."

"But what of the loss of a little or even of much

money compared to true and noble services such as you have rendered me at the risk of your life?" asked Gonzalez.

He was unable to move Juan from his purpose, though he did exact the promise that Juan should counsel with his wife, father and other relatives, and see if they did not regard this a rash step. Then they parted, each enjoying the highest esteem of the other, and both grieved at the thought of separation.

There was a little but long council held at Juan's home that night, and the decision was reached by him and his wife that they must seek a new home, but where were they to go, and how many of their reasons should they give their fathers and mothers? They had never told the old people all they knew.

They had purposely kept back much for the sake of the happiness of their parents. Finally they decided to reveal the whole matter. This led to a full council on the next morning of all the little company of kinspeople, with the exception of Martinez and Juanita, who were allowed to go riding with Señor Gonzalez. The decision which had been reached by the little council of the night before was adhered to, but the questions, "where shall we go, and what shall we do?" were not so easily settled. Santiago de Cuba and the mercantile business were discussed, but this would require constant dealings with the

very company which they desired to avoid above all others. Similar objections were raised to other towns. One thing, and that was the education of their children, must have great weight with Juan and Alicia in settling the question.

Gonzalez was grieved to hear that the decision to leave his employment was to be adhered to; but he did not know what to advise as to where they had best go. For some time Juan had been thinking of a plan, but feared to suggest it; now, through sheer desperation, he ventured to make it known. It was to go into business in the city of Havana. That would be a bold stroke, it was true, but something bold should be done, or they would have to flee from their native island.

For a time he stood alone in the advocacy of his proposition, but he supported it with reasonings that were inspired by the desperateness of the situation. The strongest points in its favor were that it would give the best possible opportunity as to the education of their children and then the very boldness of the stroke would intimidate their persistent foe. Juan felt sure that his interview with the captain of the "Josefita" had thoroughly alarmed the enemies. Moreover he believed that Alonzo Menendez was guilty of crime against the Menendez company, and this would cause him to be so

alarmed by the bold move as to put a stop, at least for the present, to his persecutions.

Juan's proposition finally prevailed, and soon preparations for the move began. The parting with Gonzalo and his mother and the breaking up of business relations which had been so continually harmonious and happy were attended by more pain than is usual, in spite of the fact that they expected to see much of each other still. Gonzalez had an office in Havana, and attended to much business there, and his mother often spent considerable time with him in the city. He now insisted on accompanying them to the city and assisting them in selecting a site for their proposed business.

Señor Martinez had many friends and former customers still living in Havana, and now that "The Ten Years War" which had cost him so heavily was over, and Spain had promised to make many concessions to Cuba, he had no reasons to fear trouble to himself in going back to the neighborhood of his old place of business.

A good stand was secured on *Calle Obispo* (Bishop street), and ere long they were putting their merchandise in place. The combined capital of the three, though not great, proved more than they had hoped, and enabled them to start with a fair stock of goods. At least for a while their home was to be above and in the rear of their storeroom.

CHAPTER IX.

Naturally, the children greatly enjoyed living in the city where so many new things of interest were to be seen. They were put into the best school the city afforded for children, and made rapid progress in their studies. This was true especially in the case of Martinez.

By the time he was twelve years of age he had read the history of Cuba until he knew the general features of it and points in the island of special historical interest. From books which were not allowed in the schools, indeed, whose circulation was prohibited by the Spanish government, he had learned of the cruel, bloody record which Spain had made in the government of the island. His sister, though two years his junior, was not a whit behind him in her feelings of patriotism, and rarely grew tired of hearing him read aloud to her from his histories. Both learned to hate Spanish dominion and to long to see free Cuba.

All this delighted the father and mother, and they were pleased to see high ambitions developing in their children. When Martinez was sixteen he was ready to enter the Havana University, so rapid had been his progress.

But we must ask the reader to go back a few years in this sketch. Fortunately for the Oliveras and Señor Martinez, just at the time they were moving to Havana, Alonzo Menendez went on a visit to Spain and for travel in other European countries. At least such was given out as the reasons for his going, but it was whispered in business circles that some complications had arisen among the members of the Menendez company. Any way, his absence and the prospect of it being continued for some time were sources of joy to Alicia.

Gonzalez was often a visitor at the home of the Oliveras, his office being on *Calle Habana*, not far from their store. When Juan and Alicia moved into a residence separate from the store, which they did after two years, then their house was his home when he was in Havana. It was he who furnished Martinez with the special histories he had been reading. Besides he continued what he had begun when they were in the factory community, namely, teaching English to the children. At first he had begun to talk it to them just to mystify and amuse them, but when he found they took such an interest in it and acquired it so rapidly, he felt special interest in teaching it to them. With them he was always a welcome visitor. His mother, too, who came now and then, received a cordial welcome from all.

Of course it was not all sunshine with our friends (I

think we can now so denominate them), but there were some clouds. One day there was a darker cloud than usual came. That was when it was known that Alonzo Menendez, after an absence of three years, was soon to return. With some there was a sense of relief when it was known that he was to bring his bride.

During the first years very pleasant business relation had sprung up between the firm of Olivera & Martinez and the elder Menendez. Having met Juan for only a few minutes at the time of his visit there, Señor Menendez did not remember him, and Juan had no special reasons for wanting to reveal his identity. At first he let his father or father-in-law attend to the business which had to be transacted with the Menendez steamer line.

The arrival of Alonzo and his Spanish bride caused quite a stir in social circles. The reception given them at the elegant suburban residence of the elder Menendez was, as the Havana dailies put it, "one of the most brilliant in the history of Havana." In the great company that visited that mansion on that evening, there was such a harmonious blending of Spaniard and Cuban that it would seem the peace between them was to continue indefinitely. Gonzalez was among the invited and, strange to say, Juan and Alicia received invitations. Several foreigners, aside from the Spanish, were present.

Among the Americans was a brilliant editor from St. Louis, Missouri. His tall, handsome figure, graceful movement, and affable manners created quite a sensation among the beautiful Cuban and Spanish señoritas. But for his Protestant proclivities he might have made a great conquest in that elegant throng. That was very much against him, though the prejudice against the Protestants was not so great as it had been formerly.

Alicia was in great trepidation when the invitation came, and Juan was both puzzled and troubled. What to do was a difficult question to settle. Had they been sure as to whether or not Alonzo himself had anything to do with the invitation being sent to them, they would not have been in so much doubt as to what they should do. After consultation with Gonzalez, they decided that they would at least call and pay their respects to the bride and groom and to the elder Menendez and wife.

With Alicia a new complication arose. Since coming back to Havana she had gone into fashionable society but little. The truth is, she was so fully bent upon giving her children a thorough education that she had been economizing in every way possible. It was only a question of health that made her consent to move into more expensive home-quarters than those at the store.

While all alone, she got out her most fashionable gown, and, spreading it out, scanned it thoroughly. Re-

membering her children, Juanita, at that very moment, in an adjoining room, trilling away on some happy notes, and then remembering she would be in the brilliant throng for only a few moments, she decided she would wear this dress. Then almost instantly came a feeling rebelling against the decision, when she thought of what Alonzo had insinuated when he found the "Cuban dog" was preferred to himself, and she felt that, for the sake of her husband who had endured so much for her, she ought to have a better and more stylish costume.

While this struggle, and it was a severe one, was in progress, a consultation was taking place at the office of Gonzalez. His sister, who was at school in the United State at the time the Oliveras were in the factory community, had a few months before returned to Cuba, having completed her education. She was now living with her mother and brother in Havana, her brother having built an elegant little home in the suburbs for their winter residence.

The consultation referred to was going on between Gonzalez and Juan, and in the midst of it Beatriz entered her brother's office, and was instantly taken into confidence. After it was decided that Juan and Alicia would go to the reception, he could not bear the thought of his wife appearing amid that elegant company in one of her old gowns, and yet he felt sure she would object

to the expense of a new one. Incidentally and laughingly—well, he meant it to be *laughingly*—he mentioned the matter to his trusted friend, Gonzalez, who immediately and earnestly declared that, if she needed a new suit, she must have it at all hazards, and begged the privilege of “footing the bill.” Juan could not consent to the last, but resolved that she who had been so true to him should have no mean costume.

The questions over which they were puzzling when Beatriz came in were how they were to select the material for the dress and how they would secure the proper measure in having it made. These questions Beatriz immediately solved by offering to select the goods and having herself measured for the dress, declaring: “Señora Olivera and I are almost the same weight and height. We found that out just a few days ago.”

Without further ceremony, the company sallied forth, and soon the goods were selected and turned over to the tailor. Beatriz looked at Juan with an appeal which was irresistible when she insisted that the tailor must be instructed to give the suit a few American touches, and he generously turned the whole matter over to her.

CHAPTER X.

The other struggle had terminated differently. Alicia resolved to use her old dress, though the decision had cost her a few tears, as she afterwards confidentially confessed to her husband.

She took her eight-year-old daughter into confidence, and was delighted, after having worked over the old dress and put it on, to have even "little" Juanita say: "Oh, mamma, you do look beautiful! Please look at yourself in the mirror." A little blush of just such loveliness as had not been provoked to come to those cheeks in many a day overspread the face of the mother, and she was so pleased after a peep into the mirror that she resolved to remain dressed until her husband should come for dinner, it being almost his hour for coming.

Only a few minutes later, Juanita turned away from the window, and, clapping her hands, exclaimed: "O mamma, papa is bringing Señor Gonzalez and his sister with him!"

"Oh, please, daughter, have them excuse me a few minutes, for I can not allow them to see me dressed up this way," and she started to run into the bedroom, but that active eight-year-old was too quick for her. Catching hold upon her mother, she clung to her, at the same

time pleading: "Mamma, please, please, *mamma cara mia*, stay." The pleading was not much regarded, but the hold of Juanita detained her until the husband and his company had entered.

It had been a long time since Alicia had done such blushing as she did then. She was too much embarrassed to notice the large bundle Juan had brought in.

All the three conspirators were, for a moment, of the opinion that they had been anticipated; and the men-folks, especially the bachelor, were not undeceived until Alicia explained that she had renovated one of her old dresses. They delicately complimented her success by confessing that they had been doing a work of supererogation. Señorita Beatriz explained to the puzzled Alicia what they meant, by undoing the large bundle, and displaying the elegant, tailor-made suit.

When Alicia comprehended the situation, she was gone before her active daughter could detain her. She had hurried into her bedroom to take "a little cry," but the proceeding was almost immediately interrupted by Beatriz and Juanita bursting into the room, bringing the new gown with them. Her pleadings were all in vain. The two uncompromising tyrants had to be obeyed, and soon had "Señorita" Alicia, as they teasingly called her, arrayed in "her majesty's" queenly robes.

That was a happy company at the informal dinner

that evening. Juan frankly declared that Alicia did not look so beautiful on her bridal day. To Beatriz' great delight Alicia was much pleased with what were called "the American touches."

Now it came the bachelor's turn to make a confession and to do some blushing. Up to that day, Gonzalez had intended to accompany his sister to the reception, but that afternoon he had unexpectedly met "a friend—a lady friend"—from the United States who was visiting Cuba. Moreover, he had also met an American gentleman, Dr. Farmer, of St. Louis, Missouri. Both of these had been invited to the reception, and Dr. Farmer, who was a prominent and elegant gentleman, would be happy, as he did not speak Spanish, to go with some one who spoke both English and Spanish, and—and—

"O you wicked Señor Marcos Gonzalez!" broke in Beatriz. "I have not known you, to blush and stammer so since it was my pleasure to make your acquaintance—well, I am not going to say just how many years ago. Let me help you a little, my stammering, young brother. It has been arranged [and she assumed an air of great importance] that you escort your friend—'my lady friend'—to the reception, and your little sister, Beatriz by name, is to go as escort and interpreter to the elegant Dr. Farmer, of St. Louis." All the company broke into a hearty laugh, the laugh of Gonzalez being accompanied

with some well-developed blushes which his sister declared made him look not a day older than twenty.

"But," continued Beatriz, "now, to speak for said little sister, Beatriz, she is fresh from the United States, where even *older* brothers, to say nothing of younger brothers," and she cast a mischievous glance at her brother, "do not make peremptory arrangements for their sisters, and enters her demurrer to such engagements being made for her even in Cuba. However, seeing that this brother is young and inexperienced, I am willing to leave the decision as to what I shall do in this case to our queenly hostess."

The hostess, after numerous whereases and witty qualifications, pleasantly rendered her decision that, this once, Señorita Beatriz should acquiesce in her brother's arrangements.

"Then, my dear hostess, may I ask something further about the said Dr. Farmer? Is he not a very tall gentleman, bearing himself quite erect, and wearing a handsome, slightly grayish mustache?"

"Just so," answers her brother, in surprise.

"Then, I am most happy to say that I had the honor of meeting the gentleman, after hearing an eloquent address which he delivered a year ago at our college. I will look like some little girl whom he is leading

around." Then all the members of the little party were happier than they had been before.

The evening came, and Alicia found herself almost rid of the fears which had haunted her since the invitation came, and her husband was never before quite so proud of his wife. "No more beautiful woman will grace the occasion," he thought, as his admiring eyes followed her. Even Martinez, looking up from a biography in which he was much interested, said: "*Mamma cara*, will you not be so condescending as to give your son a kiss before you go?" Mamma blushed, and replied by imprinting a kiss on each of the boy's cheeks. As for Juanita, she just followed her mother about the house and talked as fast as her tongue would allow.

Busy as had been the day with Alicia, she had indulged more than usual in counting her "prayer-beads," and more times during the day than was her wont, she had gone over to a Catholic church to offer prayers to the Virgin. Nor was her husband entirely undisturbed at the thought of encountering the crafty Spaniard. It was late when they arrived at the brilliantly lighted Menendez mansion, and they found it indeed a scene of gayety and apparent joy. They had been driven over in an elegant carriage which Juan had insisted that they use on this occasion, and as they alighted he told the driver to await them.

They were met on the sidewalk by servants who escorted them to the cloak-room, we would call it in America, but that is hardly proper in a land where cloaks are rarely used. Then their cards were handed to the master of ceremonies, who graciously received the guests, and proceeded to present them to the bride and bridegroom, but not until he had taken a look at Alicia. She could but notice this, and blushed at the very moment she was presented to the elegant couple. This made her rich complexion more beautiful than ever. As they greeted each other, the tall, erect bride, with complexion as colorless as whitest marble, presented a strong contrast to the Cuban style of beauty. All unconscious of the antecedent history of the one whom she was greeting, the bride familiarly placed her hands upon the roseate shoulders of Alicia, and stooping, tenderly imprinted a kiss upon either cheek of the now much agitated little woman.

This greeting was a departure from the regular etiquette, but was noticed by only a few. Both Alonzo and Juan observed it. Alonzo seemed lost for a moment as he received Alicia, but instantly recovered himself, and graciously but formally received her, pronouncing the "Señora Olivera" with cold emphasis. The bride received Juan with the usual formality, and Alonzo ex-

tended his hand rather nervously, and seemed glad when Juan passed on.

Alicia met the elder Menendez and his wife for the first time, and she and Juan stood for several minutes talking to the old people. By this time Alicia had recovered her self-possession, and her conversational powers, usually good, were now at their best. At this moment, some one plucked her by the arm, and turning she met the smile of Beatriz who presented the tall Missourian, remarking, "Dr. Farmer is a gentleman whom I had the honor of meeting while I was in the United States, and these," looking up at Dr. Farmer and pointing to Juan and Alicia, "are among the very dearest friends of our family."

Then came Gonzalez with a charming American lady leaning on his arm, while he blushed like a boy, making it difficult for his sister to keep from breaking into cheery laugh. He proceeded to introduce his American friend. The meeting of the little company was much more cordial than usual, and the six stood conversing for a minute. In looking up to the tall doctor who had spoken to her in English, very few words of which she understood, Alicia happened to glance beyond him, and saw that Alonzo was looking at their little company. She distinctly perceived him bite his lips as he turned away to reply to some one who had addressed him. Beatriz

came to the relief of the doctor and Alicia, and pleasantly interpreted for them, not noticing the latter's change of manner.

Juan saw that his wife had suddenly grown pale, and guessed the cause of it. Giving the doctor a cordial invitation to call to see him at his place of business and in his home, then speaking to his wife, they turned to the elder Menendez and his wife and bade them good evening. As if arming themselves for some deadly conflict, they now advanced to where Alonzo and his bride had taken seats and bade them good evening. The bride, still unconscious of whom these guests were, beyond the name which had been announced and the irresistible charm which drew her toward the little Cuban señora, said that she and her husband were soon going to be in a home of their own, and would be happy to have Señor and Señora Olivera call to see them. Just then, to the immense relief of the Oliveras, some one pressed by them and began talking to the bride and groom. At this Juan and Alicia bowed and retired.

Though a sense of great relief came over them as they drove home, it can hardly be said that they were very happy. Evidently they had similar fears, but they did not talk much that evening.

CHAPTER XI.

On the following Sunday evening, the leading theater gave a "benefit" to the newly wedded couple. In the same papers announcing the "benefit" was the announcement that the Rev. Dr. Farmer, of the United States, would preach at the Baptist Mission, on Sunday evening. Alicia called attention to the latter notice, and was greatly shocked when her husband ventured to laugh at her troubled look. She was a more loyal Catholic than he, and it worried her to find that one who had proved himself so pleasant should be a hated Protestant, and more than that—a Protestant priest.

She was still more shocked when, on naming the matter to Beatriz, that young lady smiled and said, "I have been in the United States too much not to be used to that sort of thing. More than that, I have almost got the consent of my mind to accompany the good doctor to the Baptist Mission, instead of going to that so-called 'benefit.' If I am led astray from the Church, you will be, in part at least, to blame for it, because you decided that I must accompany him to the reception."

Alicia hastily "crossed" herself, and Beatriz observing it, continued, "Now, my dear, good Señora Olivera, do you not think it is sinful to have these theatrical per-

formances on the Sabbath? The Protestant ministers or priests, in the United States, never think of attending the theater at any time, to say nothing of the Sabbath, and the devout private members never go." Alicia confessed that such performances as were common in the Havana theater were not proper for the Sabbath, and as for the bull-fights, she regarded them barbarous at any time, and a desecration of the Sabbath when given on that day.

Beatriz did go to the Protestant services, but determined to keep the matter a profound secret from her mother and brother, but imagine her astonishment when she saw her brother and his friend—"his lady friend"—quietly come into the meeting.

After a profound sermon from Dr. Farmer in English, Dr. Alberto Diaz, the pastor, requested him to talk awhile to the many present who did not speak English. He did so, Dr. Diaz interpreting. In speaking to Dr. Farmer about it afterwards, Beatriz insisted that he had given her a double dose of Protestantism. Later she and her brother twitted each other for having stolen into a heretical meeting, but neither of them felt very guilty.

During the week following the reception, Dr. Farmer called on Juan at his store, and was invited to dine at the Olivera home, on Thursday evening. Gonzalez, his

sister, and his lady friend were also invited. All were present, and it was certainly a happy gathering. Alicia surprised even herself in the cordiality with which she treated the Protestant Americans.

The evening at the Menendez mansion was extensively discussed, Dr. Farmer expressing his astonishment at the rich display on the occasion. He had seen nothing to equal it even among the rich of the United States. Miss Johnson, for that was the name of the friend—"the lady friend"—of Gonzalez, agreed with the doctor that the elegance displayed was certainly unusual to American eyes.

Both thought the bride was indeed comely, but did not admire her Castillian complexion because it was too much like the paleness of the corpse. They much preferred the rich, roseate complexion possessed by many of the Cuban ladies.

The American friends were not only astonished at the Sunday theater, but were shocked. In its condemnation the doctor was more stern than Alicia had yet seen him, but she could only feel that his severe criticism was just. From Señorita Gonzalez he had learned something of the character of such performances, and felt they could not be consistently patronized by any follower of the lowly Nazarene, no matter whether he was a Protestant

or Catholic, even when they were not given on the Lord's Day.

Alicia took deep interest in what was said of these things, and was glad to have Beatriz translate it to her and Juan. Beatriz found herself inclined to soften some of the sterner expressions, knowing that often what Americans regard as kind frankness sounded harsh to Cuban ears. She assured the host and hostess that there was not the slightest intention on the doctor's part to be rude toward the Catholics entertaining him.

When the company broke up it required no strain on the conscience of the guests to say they had spent a delightful evening. When they had all gone, Juan and Alicia sat some time discussing the incidents of the evening. They could not feel otherwise than that the doctor's condemnation of the Sunday theater was just, and they could but feel that there was some justice in what he said of it being incompatible with true discipleship to patronize such performances even on week evenings. They had not gone to the theater much of late years, but, like most of the Cubans, they found it a great attraction, and had not been taught that there was any wrong in patronizing it.

The doctor had taken great interest in Martinez and Juanita, asking them many questions about their studies, reading, and amusements. He was astonished to

find Martinez so well up in general history, and delighted to learn that both, through the instruction of Gonzalez and their own diligence, were so rapidly acquiring the English language. He was anxious that they come to the United States for several years of study when they had reached the proper age, offering to be of what assistance he could to them.

A few days after this evening with the Oliveras, Dr. Farmer left the Island, but not until he had made a farewell call to thank them for the great pleasure they had given him by their kind attentions. It was evident to the parents that quite a friendship had grown up between the doctor and the children. To help it along he had brought each of them an interesting little book to help along in their study of the English.

For most of the two years following their marriage, Alonzo Menendez and his wife were abroad. They made a tour of the United States, besides traveling much in Europe. When they returned they went to housekeeping in an elegant mansion which had been built for them. This house was uncomfortably close to the home of Juan. It was only a few blocks away, and for Alonzo to reach the general office of the Menendez company, he would most conveniently take the street leading immediately by the Olivera home.

For some time nothing happened to increase the fears

Juan and Alicia already felt. Alicia often saw the carriage of Alonzo pass by. The narrowness of the street and the proximity of the residence to the street—two things very common in that city—enable one to look into a carriage, or any one in a carriage to see into the residence when the doors or windows are open.

Juanita was now ten years of age, and was coming to look like mother did when a young lady. One day, while she was standing at the window looking out, the upper section of the shutters being open, Alonzo passed. Immediately Juanita ran to her mother and told her how a handsome señor had at first glanced at her, then had looked her full in the face, turned very pale, and passed on murmuring something to himself.

Soon after the return of Alonzo and his wife, gossip spread the news that there was not as much happiness in their home as Cupid had lead them to dream of. It was said that he was growing morose, and that she was losing her wonted vivacity and becoming low-spirited. At least one person, Alicia, was saddened by this news. She had cherished the hope that the marriage would prove a happy one. In this she was not altogether unselfish.

She had never called on the younger Señora Menendez; indeed, had hoped that lady would never recognize her. In this last she was to be disappointed, for

one morning soon after her return to the city, Señora Menendez had bowed to Alicia while they were in the cathedral, and then had made it convenient to join her on the sidewalk, insisting on taking her home in the carriage. Alicia was much disturbed, for she did not want the other to know where she lived, and was tempted to make some excuse for not going immediately home, but Señora Menendez was friendly and even confidential, and, withal, seemed so depressed and sad, that Alicia was made to repent of her design. When they reached the window at which Juanita was at the moment standing, and Señora Menendez so kindly asked of her children and regarded Juanita so tenderly, Alicia was quite won and invited the other in. This invitation was declined, but with the assurance by Señora Menendez that she was going to be very informal and would call soon.

They had scarcely parted when Alonzo appeared a few yards away, and Alicia barely got into her home in time to escape meeting him face to face, and not until she had marked the scowl upon his face as he saw his carriage leaving the door. He hardly deigned a word to his wife, but hurried on down the street. The moment he passed the window, Juanita pulled her mother to the window, to show her the man who had acted so strangely a few days before. The dear little girl, innocent and unsuspecting, did not notice how flushed and pained her mother's face appeared.

CHAPTER XII.

Señora Menendez was true to her word, and made quite a lengthy and informal call at the Olivera home. She explained why she was so drawn to Alicia the first time they had ever met, and said her husband had seemed so annoyed that she should have greeted Señora Olivera so familiarly on the evening of the reception.

When she was departing, she said, with every appearance of sincerity and frankness, that she had enjoyed the visit more than any in a long time, and remarked that Señora Olivera must have a very happy home. Even after she had affectionately kissed Juanita good-by, she, still holding to her hand, begged the mother to let that bright piece of sunshine accompany her home. Juanita was eager enough to go, but the mother quickly and firmly decided the little girl must study her lessons.

All the balance of the day, Alicia was in a very disturbed state of mind. So flushed were her cheeks in the evening when her husband came, he immediately observed it, and asked if she was unwell. He was not altogether satisfied when answered in the negative, but said no more until the children had retired.

His affectionate, trusting wife did not then wait for him to renew his question, but told him of the call of the

señora, and of the strange request that took almost the form of pleading, in regard to Juanita. She also told him of an earnest request that Señora Menendez had made that Juanita some day be allowed to accompany her on one of her drives into the country. Alicia had thanked her heartily, and promised to ask Juanita's father about it.

At first Juan was disposed to look upon it as a very natural request, and favored allowing Juanita to go, then he began to have strange, indefinable feelings akin to those experienced by his wife. It so happened that Alonzo was away at this time on business, and his wife called, and was so importunate in her pleadings, that Juanita was allowed to accompany her on a drive out to Buena Vista, a delightful place about seven miles in the country.

When Juanita was handed into her home from the elegant carriage, her cheeks were all aglow with the touches of the balmy atmosphere, and especially with the ecstasy she felt. Her mother was glad for these happy effects, but still a terrible foreboding clung to her mind.

Juanita had much to tell her about the splendid drive and of the many little kindnesses lavished upon her by Señora Menendez. Indeed, she talked so much about the señora that Beatriz said she herself was getting jealous of the tall Spaniard—feared she was stealing the af-

fections of her little sweetheart away from her. Juanita felt the force of this gentle rebuke, and said no one could do that, especially with carriage-drives and little kindnesses.

Alicia, feeling that the matter was, in some of its features, at least, common to the Gonzalez and Olivera families, told Beatriz of her forebodings, and insisted, as they had done with her brother, that Marcos might suffer in his business because of Alonzo's hatred of the Oliveras. Beatriz tried to laugh away such a thought, then, growing serious and tender, she asked, "What is a friendship worth that will not stand such a test?" and, putting her arms around Alicia, she drew her close up to her heart.

The next time Señora Menendez called, she grew more confiding than ever before. After asking Alicia if she was happy in her home, and answering the question herself with, "Why should I have asked such a question? Of course you are happy—*very* happy—for how could you be otherwise with a kind, *loving* husband, and fond and obedient children." Then there was a painful silence, and, with a sigh, she continued, "Has your married life been all that you dreamed it would when you married?" With a faint, little laugh, Alicia answered, "Of course not. Who ever did realize all of his dreams on such a line?"

There was another pause, and then Señora Menendez, as if summoning all of her strength for some great task, walked the floor back and forth several times, and then said, "Señora Olivera, my good friend—may I call you so?—I am not happy. I am starving to love and to be loved. I am petted, flattered, even honored, and those things, may be, ought to satisfy a proud Castilian, but such things do not satisfy me. Indeed, they are becoming hateful to me. Pardon me for intruding my burdens upon you, but I feel that I can not bear them alone any longer."

Then she sat down, buried her face in her hands, and actually sobbed. Alicia was greatly distressed and, putting her arms around the señora, tried hard to comfort her. For this her guest seemed grateful, and was more cheerful when she went away.

The unhappiness of the Spaniard had a great influence over the feelings of Alicia, and caused her to consent to accompany that lady on one of her drives into the country. Juanita, to her great joy, was allowed to go also. When Juan came home the evening following the drive, he was delighted to find Alicia so rested and cheerful. Though he had not mentioned it, he had noticed that she, of late, had a tired, depressed look, and had suspected that she needed a breath of country air. This had made him think of venturing the extravagance

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of a horse and carriage, and now the effect of this drive quite determined him on making the venture. Yet he felt in taking such a step, he was hardly treating his friends, Gonzalez and his sister, fair, for again and again they had insisted that their horse and carriage with the driver were at the service of Alicia and children at almost any time.

The fears of the Oliveras lest the friendship shown them by Gonzalez would be made the occasion of damage to his business because of the meanness of Alonzo had prevented them from accepting all the offers made to them by that generous man and his equally generous sister.

The sugar-making season came around again. The holiday vacation of the schools came just at the time Gonzalez had to leave the city to put his factory in order, and he begged that Martinez and Juanita be allowed to go with him and spend their vacation at the mill colony. At first the parents hesitated, but when they remembered that it would save them from the embarrassing situation brought on by the constant requests of Señora Menendez that Juanita be allowed to be with her, they consented.

Of course the children were delighted, and it was a happy ten days that they spent in the community they remembered so well. They having been cooped up in the city for several years made the freedom of the open

air seem much happier than it once seemed. Then Gonzalez surprised them by providing each with a saddle and pony horse. At first Juanita felt a little afraid, but before the ten days were over, she could gallop along by the side of Martinez quite fearlessly, and he was as gallant toward her as a young man should be toward his sweetheart.

Martinez and Juanita were much missed in their home, but the father and mother did not miss Juanita more than Señora A. Menendez seemed to miss her. She called in often to inquire after the children and to pour her griefs into the sympathizing ear of Alicia. She revealed more and more of her life, and alarmed Alicia by revealing the fact that Alonzo was bitterly opposed to her calling at the Olivera home, yet was always delighted to have Juanita come to his home, and vied with his wife in attentions to her. This, Señora Menendez thought, was strange. For her part, she did not understand it. Moreover, when Juanita was gone, he would immediately relapse into his morose mood, being even more unpleasant than usual.

Alicia had called a few times at the home of the younger Menendez, but always at a time when she was sure Alonzo was not at home, and then her stays were brief.

When the children returned from the factory community, they were delighted to find that their father had purchased a horse and small buggy. Soon Martinez had learned to manage the horse almost as well as his father could, and the mother, after going with him on several drives herself, was willing to trust him and Juanita to drive by themselves. This made less occasion for Juanita to be with Señora Menendez. Among all the Oliveras and Martinezes, the little buggy and horse were kept busy.

Nothing made Martinez neglect his studies and reading. When he was sixteen he was admitted into the Havana University, and there began a very successful career for one of his age. Since 1871, when some of the students were accused of conspiracy against the Spanish government and were shot, the school had been closely watched by the Spanish officials. The members of the faculty used great precaution to prevent any dangerous expression of views on the part of the students. This was a source of irritation to Martinez, for he was positively in favor of "Cuba for the Cubans," still his father, who was so anxious for him to secure the best education possible, counseled him to submit to the rules.

Martinez made such good progress that within four years he had completed all the courses at the university that his father desired him to take. His father now

proposed to send him to the United States for four or five years, and Juanita, who had also made good progress in her studies, was to accompany him to the United States and to enter a female college.

These later years had been marked by nothing very startling in the association of the Olivera and Menendez families. Alicia had never been entirely satisfied of the sincerity of the professed friendship of Señora Menendez, who said that her happiest hours were those spent in company with Señora Olivera and when Juanita was with her.

CHAPTER XIII.

The day on which Martinez and Juanita left Cuba for the United States marked an important epoch in their lives. From childhood they had never known more than a few days of separation from their mother at one time. It was a grief to part with their parents for a stay of several years in a foreign land. But the hardest trial of that day was with the parents themselves. They accompanied the children to the steamer on which they were to go. It stood out about a half-mile from the wharf, and was flying the United States flag. The parting was tender and loving, many kisses being imprinted on the glowing cheeks of the now young man and young woman by the parents who had not yet learned that their loved ones were more than mere children.

For some days the home seemed desolate to a degree beyond endurance, until the parents became somewhat accustomed to the loss, but even then the anxious solicitude for their children never ceased for a day, and each day, and often many times in a day, Alicia importuned the Holy Virgin in behalf of her far-away loved ones, and pleaded for their safe return.

With Martinez and Juanita it was somewhat different. While there was real sorrow in the parting, they were amid new scenes, and such as would occupy much of their attention. They watched the little boat in which their father and mother returned to the shore, until it reached the wharf and the loved ones disappeared, then they turned away, facing toward the land whence they were bound. The steamer was already under way, and was moving along by the great fortress of Cabañas, and soon passed under the very walls of old Morro Castle, the most renowned fort on the island.

When the last of their native land faded from their view, Juanita hastily brushed away a tear, and looked up into the face of her strong brother in a way that said only too plainly that she must depend upon him now as never before. The weakness (as some count it) that was about to cause him to shed tears was subdued with some effort, and he instantly responded to her silent appeal with a look that was all that even the most exacting sister could ask.

A demand for proof of his promise came almost immediately. Not many minutes after the ship had passed out of sight of land, Juanita turned deathly pale, and Martinez hastily conducted her to her stateroom. That monster of the sea which is said to be no respecter of persons seemed to be in a hurry to seize

this beautiful victim. Martinez did what he could for his sister, all the time himself compelled to wage a desperate fight against the same monster, but what can help the victim at such an hour! In spite of all that could be done, Juanita was prostrated during nearly all of the voyage, but fortunately it was not a long voyage.

Strange sights and sounds greeted them when they landed on the first foreign shore they had ever seen. They heard not a word in their own tongue, except when they conversed with each other. They found that their small stock of English was in much demand, though it was not as readily understood as they hoped it would be. The tall buildings and wide streets in the city where they landed struck them as strange.

At the hotel where they stopped for the night, they found almost everything different from what they had been accustomed to. They had not been used to seeing people take a regular meal early in the morning. They were accustomed to having only a small cup of coffee until about ten o'clock.

Then, when they boarded the railway-train, they found it much more elegant than any they had ever seen before, having accommodations they had not dreamed of finding. At night they took the sleeping-

car, and found it a veritable palace. Along the way many strange sights greeted them.

It had been purposely arranged that Juanita should attend a college in the same city where the university Martinez was to enter was located, and they were fortunate enough to secure board in the same home.

Entering school amid such strange surroundings and where he was the object of so much curious attention from the other students was exceedingly trying to Martinez, and poor Juanita had a much severer struggle than that experienced by her brother. Both found their teachers kind and considerate, and the people where they boarded were exceedingly kind, though, at first, it was hard for them to eat the food as it was prepared, and without the wine to which they had been accustomed at their meals. Then the idea of having fires for heat was new.

Juanita was just eighteen; and possessed of almost perfect features, with that healthful glow in complexion often seen in Cuba. She was just that style of beauty to attract attention in the United States. Her abundant raven locks were the admiration of her fellow students. With her honest, attractive face and gentle manners she won her way very quickly among the teachers and the better class of students in the college.

Many and interesting incidents marked their stay in

the United States, but there is no time to narrate these, for writer and reader, in this story, are mainly concerned about Cuba and scenes in that interesting land. Soon after Juanita entered college, a little incident occurred which should be related because of the connection it has with what is to follow. She had never seen an electric street-car before reaching the United States. A short time after she entered college, as she was returning from the college to her boarding-place one afternoon, she started to cross the street. A minute before, she had noticed that there was a car coming, but it was so far away that she did not think of it reaching her neighborhood so quickly. Just as she reached the track her attention was attracted in the opposite direction from the car, and she stopped to look, and at the moment the car approached at rapid speed. The motorman vigorously rang his alarm-bell, but that seemed to only confuse her. A young man, standing on the front end of the car, took in the situation and sprang from the car just in time to save her by pushing her out of the way. Before he could clear the track he was struck by the car and knocked down, fortunately falling away from the car.

For a moment, Juanita was too dazed to take in the situation, but the instant she realized that the young man had saved her life at the risk of his own, she forgot

all of her usual reticence and rushed to his side and actually assisted him in recovering his feet. When she found that he was not seriously hurt, she began to shower upon him her thanks for his gallantry. In doing this, she mixed up the Spanish and English in beautiful confusion—so he thought.

The accident occurred in a short distance of her boarding-place, and the young rescuer insisted on seeing her safely home. There he was met and heartily thanked by Martinez, whom he had seen at the university. Before they parted they were on fair terms of friendship.

When the Christmas holidays came, Mr. Carlton, for that was the young man's name, came as he had done before, to call on Martinez, but this time he included Juanita in his visit, as the college rules were relaxed during that season. He soon made known the object of his call. He had planned an excursion for a party of young people and had come to invite Martinez—and Juanita—to join the party. They thankfully accepted the invitation, and were still more grateful when they learned the party had been planned in their honor.

It turned out to be a most delightful excursion, and it so happened that Martinez, after they had returned, was no longer "heart whole and fancy free" any more than was Carlton. It was a blue-eyed, brown-haired

American lass that had captured him. Of this Carlton was glad, for he thought Martinez would, in consequence, be less disposed to prove over-exacting in his protectorship over Juanita. At least four young persons were sorry when the Christmas vacation was over, and about that number were sometimes caught dreamily gazing—well, at nothing in particular—just looking out into space.

The Cubans both made good progress in their studies, and were learning to speak the English quite well. The long summer vacation proved to be a most delightful and profitable season to them, and this was largely due to the management of young Carlton. Several summer Chautauquas were visited. Among other things of a Protestant type, the Cubans had gone so far as to attend some religious services in Protestant churches. In numerous ways they had learned that Protestants were not such dangerous people as they had been taught to believe.

But they had not been three years in America, when a most painful incident called Martinez home. For some time there had been much restlessness among the Cubans, because of the continual refusal of Spain to carry out the concessions promised at the close of the "Ten Years War," and because of the increased demands made upon Cuba, and now there were uprisings

in many parts of the island, in open rebellion against Spanish authority.

It was easy to guess where Juan Olivera's sympathies were, and yet, for the sake of his old father and mother and the parents of his wife and, most of all, because he was so anxious to have the education of his children completed, he had been exceedingly prudent as to his speech, and had taken no part in the public demonstrations. In spite of his prudence, he had been seized and thrown into prison, and it was this news which called Martinez home.

CHAPTER XIV.

After consultation by the mother with the grandparents, it was decided that it would be wisest to allow Juanita to remain in the United States, and her mother so wrote her, but she insisted that she must immediately go to her mother and help her to bear the burdens and sorrows which had come upon her.

There was great regret felt and much sympathy expressed in both the college communities on account of the unhappy turn things had taken with the young Cuban students. There were some partings that were more delicately tender than should be minutely described in a writing for the general public. Many of the readers can supply any needed particulars.

The journey homeward proved more dangerous than had been feared. The Spanish authorities were on the alert, and were careful to watch anyone or anything from the United States. When the ship on which Martinez and Juanita sailed reached the Havana harbor, none of its passengers were permitted to land until they and their belongings had been thoroughly searched. Especially were Cubans of the better class subjected to closest scrutiny, and all the men required to take oath of allegiance to Spain.

Martinez had hoped that his extremely youthful appearance would save him from being required to take the oath, but in this he was mistaken. The officials pounced upon him just as if he had been a special prize for which they had been long in waiting. His baggage was thoroughly examined, and unfortunately the letter calling him home, and giving the reason for it, was found. When he quietly but firmly declined to take the oath, saying that he would claim to be an American citizen, they forbade his making any effort to leave the ship. The idea of his claiming to be a citizen of the United States was received with derision.

Juanita was told that she could go ashore whenever she liked, and Martinez insisted that she go, and make her way home, and let the situation be known. Just as they were debating the matter, and Juanita had determined in her mind that she would go to her warm friend, Señora Menendez, and appeal for help in getting her brother released, a boat arrived at the ship with a man who had a note from Señora A. Menendez, asking Juanita to allow the gentleman to bring her ashore, and for her to come immediately to the Menendez home, unless some one was at the wharf to meet her.

This seemed to be a most happy solution to one part of the difficulty, and Juanita, speaking to her brother in English, assured him that she would come to his help.

through the influence of Señora Menendez. He expressed his fears for her and advised her to be very watchful. Still he allowed her to take his baggage with hers. In the midst of the slight confusion which occurred at the moment his sister was lifted into the boat, he managed to secretly thrust a previously prepared note into the hand of the boatman whom he happened to know.

From inquiry he learned that the ship would leave the harbor the next day at noon, and its officers assured him that all they could do was to return him to the United States, unless he could get permission to land. This fully determined him on what course he would pursue, a dangerous one too, but he felt the case was a desperate one. This was provided his sister did not succeed that day in securing permission for him to land, and he had little if any hope on that line. Indeed, every time he thought of Juanita, there was something which made him tremble for her safety. He did not understand why she was advised to go to the Menendez mansion instead of to her own home. He had never liked that Señora Menendez, and had often felt ill at ease because of her assiduous attentions to Juanita.

His mind, filled with such thoughts as these, and his fear that his mother had been turned out of their home, made the afternoon drag slowly and heavily on. He

mixed freely with the sailors while they were unloading the cargo. Several times he made it convenient to be of assistance to some of them. He was glad to find that they, as well as the officers of the ship, were in sympathy with him because of his detention.

Night came, and no news from his sister. A feeling of desperation took hold upon him, and he impatiently awaited the midnight hour. The sailors were busy until about eleven o'clock, but at that hour they were released for the night, and soon most of them were asleep. He had secretly spoken to the night-watchman for the east side of the ship, and that man had promised him (for a "consideration," I am ashamed to say) that he would not interfere with Martinez leaving the ship, provided he would do so very *quietly*.

At 11:30 P. M., all the sailors except one had retired, and Martinez found this was the one who had promised to assist him. The waiting for that last half-hour before the cathedral bells would ring the midnight hour seemed an age, and many fears haunted him. The boatman might not dare to come. If he came he might have betrayed him, and would, therefore, only come to take him ashore to be lodged in a dungeon.

At last the bells rang out their midnight chimes, and, almost before the sound died away, the gentle strokes of oars were heard not far south of the ship. He strained

his eyes, and, though it was only starlight, he could see the dim outlines of a boat and one man manipulating the oars. Already the sailor had the rude rope-ladder hanging over the side of the ship. A thrill of joy took possession of Martinez, when he saw the coming boatman wave a white handkerchief. That was to be the given signal.

When the boat glided along by the side of the steamer, Martinez, silently uttering a prayer to the "Good Mother," climbed over the deck-railing and noiselessly descended on the rope-ladder until he could leap into the small boat. He felt like embracing the boatman, but it was not a time for such demonstration.

Once in the boat, he silently pointed to a dark spot on the shore, not far from which the ship was anchored. The place was just south of the walls of the castle of Cabañas, on the opposite side of the bay from the city. The boatman understood, and quietly headed the boat toward the spot indicated.

When they were well away from the ship they ventured to converse in a whisper. Martinez anxiously asked of his sister, and was told that Señor A. Menendez had met her at the wharf, and had taken her away in his carriage, ordering the baggage to be sent on after them. Martinez tried to convince himself that all was well as to his sister, but his effort was a failure.

Gloomy forebodings took such complete possession of him that he almost forgot to ask the boatman many other important questions.

He learned that the city was in an excited condition, that many prominent citizens were being arrested and thrown into prison. He also learned all the boatman knew, and that was not much, of the disposition of the sentinels on the east side of the bay.

Before they had reached the shore he had given the boatman the amount which he had promised him, and something additional for his promptness. He had some difficulty in landing, during which he was startled by the barking of a stray dog, that seemed to have constituted himself guardian of that shore.

Slowly and cautiously he almost crawled up the steep bluff, ever now and then stopping to listen. Near the top of the ridge he thought he could see the faint outlines of a sentry, who seemed in a sitting posture. He watched the object for some time, but not seeing it move, he proceeded. When at the top he could hear voices on the inside of the fortress. Evidently some of the speakers were excited, and were talking louder than they thought they were.

He could see from the reflection of the light on the walls that the persons carrying them were moving toward the north end of the fortress, at which point is the

only entrance through the outer wall. A bold purpose took possession of him, coming, as he felt, like an inspiration. He took no time to weigh it, but hurried along the east wall of the castle and reached a point between the gate and the Morro Castle just before the men with the light came forth. Hiding himself in a cleft in the rocks he awaited the approach of the men.

Soon the three, all Spanish officers, one of them bearing a lantern, approached. They were engaged in conversation, in a low tone, yet they passed so near to him that he could plainly hear what they were saying for the few moments they were nearest to him. They were saying that they had safely conveyed some prominent Cuban citizens who were under arrest from Punta Castle to that of Cabañas, and that this transfer was being made without the knowledge of the Cuban population. One of them said he understood that the military governor of the city had some Havana citizens confined in the dungeons of the old fort near his palace that he wanted secretly moved to Morro Castle, as he was afraid that the people might rise up, overpower the guards and release them. This transfer must be made as early as the following Saturday night.

Martinez waited until the officers had disappeared over the bluff toward the boat-landing near Morro, then he hastened as much as he dared back on the east

side of Cabañas, and then south to Regla, hoping that he, without being noticed, could cross the bay on the early morning ferry-boat. He was now sorry that he was dressed in a suit which was more common in the United States than in Cuba.

CHAPTER XV.

The cause of Juan Olivera's arrest his family and friends did not know, but as to who was the instigator of it, Alicia needed no one to tell her. Of late, though Señora Menendez continued her visits, she had ceased to be so confidential, but had plied Alicia with many questions as to her former life. One day, at an unexpected moment, she had asked: "Were you acquainted with Alonzo when he was a young man?" Alicia could not keep back the blood which hurried to her face, and she was still more agitated when she noticed that she was being closely watched by the speaker. She replied with a simple, "Si, Señora."

While she was wondering how she would meet other questions which might follow on the subject, Señora Menendez changed the subject, and asked rather indifferently about something else, yet Alicia was made unhappy by her visitor departing sooner and more abruptly than usual, and this unhappy feeling was increased when several days passed without the usual call.

After several weeks, Señora Menendez called, and tried to seem as cordial as ever, but her very effort sent a chill to the heart of the haunted Alicia. Once while she was looking after something about the court of the

building, she suddenly turned to her guest, and found the eyes of the latter were following her every movement, and with an expression that was almost savage. She gave a start which was noticed by her guest, who broke into an effort at a little laugh.

While these things were occurring in the Olivera home, things of equal significance were happening in connection with the business of the store. The dealings with the Menendez company had grown less and less satisfactory until now rupture was threatened.

When the war-cloud arose, Juan saw plainly that the sooner the business of Olivera & Martinez was closed out the better for the firm, and was aiming at this end with all the haste that was wise, when he was arrested by the orders of the governor, and was placed in one of the dungeons of the old fort adjoining the palace of that governor. A few days later the goods of the firm were seized, and the elder Olivera and Señor Martinez ordered to leave the city immediately.

In about a week Alicia was ordered to move out of her home, the house with the most valuable furniture having been seized. The persecuted little woman was now almost crushed. In the midst of her trouble, Señora Menendez called on her, and even went so far as to invite her to come to the Menendez home. Alicia felt that she had rather die than accept the invitation.

She could but feel that it was mocking at her calamity, yet the beautiful Spaniard seemed in deep sympathy with her Cuban friend, and appeared to be all unconscious that her own husband was the instigator of all the trouble.

Alicia felt that she could trust but few people, especially if they were Spanish or Spanish sympathizers. Beatriz and her mother had gone to the plantation, Marcos feeling that they would be safer there. He had again seen the wicked hand of Alonzo in discriminations that had been made against his business by the Menendez company. He did not dare to offer his Havana home for sale as that would be made an excuse by the Spanish officials for seizing it. He was doing all in his power to secure the release of Juan, but he himself was constantly being watched.

Alicia went to the priest of her church, Los Angeles, but he, as nearly all of the priests were, was a Spaniard, and seemed to care for Cuba and the Cubans only as source of his revenue. So it seemed to even the devout Catholic that she was, and her husband had long ago told her as much. Then, too, often when she went to the confessional, this priest intimated that she was keeping back some things she ought to confess. At this time he was not only of no assistance to her, but actually intimated that these calamities were judgments sent upon her because of the sins she had failed to confess.

Though she almost shuddered at the thought, yet she began to feel that the *padre* was not only going to fail to render her any assistance or comfort, but that she could not dare to reveal her plans to him, least he betray her. Indeed, he insolently demanded to know her plans. Fortunately for the honest, good woman she had no definite plans, so crushed had she been, and she frankly told him so, and further said that was what she had come to him for. He haughtily shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

This interview with one whom she had been taught was the representative of the "Holy Mother" almost prostrated her, and made her ask herself again and again if, after all, she might not be deceived as to the religious beliefs she had so earnestly cherished and conscientiously taught to her children. She began to understand as never before what she had regarded as coldness and lack of zeal on the part of her husband and Señor Gonzalez in matters of the Church.

The best the suffering woman could do was to move into the miserable hovel in which her father and mother were stopping and next to the one of the same kind occupied by her father-in-law, in a village about five miles out of the city. There she impatiently and anxiously awaited the coming of her son. She was now sorry that she had written him to come, for what could he do ?

Now it began to be rumored about the city that the Cubans who had been arrested as "suspects" would be put to death. This alarmed Alicia so that she resolved to go into the city and do any thing that was reasonable for a woman and a wife to do. She would even go to the very city governor himself on behalf of her husband.

Her mother was too feeble to accompany her and her mother-in-law was detained at the bedside of her husband, who was seriously sick with malarial fever. She was surprised when she found herself resolved to go to Señora A. Menendez and appeal to her to help. She could bear any such humiliation, if she could thus save her husband. But what if Alonzo should be at home! For a moment this thought staggered her, but after a struggle, the intensity of which can never be described, she resolved to go any way, and if needs be, appeal to even *him* for help.

She found only Señora Menendez at home, and was received cordially, but when the object of her mission was made known, a frown came over the face of the fair Spanish woman, and there was a nervous shrug of the shoulders; but there was a look that seemed to have a touch of real sadness, which followed the frown. Then came these startling words: "My dear little Cuban friend, whom I learned to love at first sight, I am almost as powerless as you are. I know not but that I may

be at any time arrested as a 'suspect', and this, in part, because I have been such a constant caller at your house. I found that I was diligently watched when I made the calls."

"But will you not go with me to your father-in-law? He has great influence with the governor." There was a haughty curl of the lip, and the proud woman said: "*Alicia cara*, if I may so address you, there is where I have the least influence. It is humiliating for me to confess it, but it is none the less true."

"Can I see your husband about this matter which is crushing my poor life out of me?" humbly and half apologetically asked Alicia, and in a moment was sorry, a hundred times over, that she had propounded such a question. The muscles of the Spaniard twitched, and her hands almost savagely grasped the chair in which she sat. Then she sprang to her feet, and excitedly paced the floor.

Alicia was stupefied with an indescribable feeling. Presently the excited woman, with more color in her pale face than her guest had ever before seen, stopped in front of Alicia, and, looking her straight in the eyes, demanded: "Señora Olivera, do you know my misery, and have you come here to taunt me, and thus add to that misery which like a vulture gnaws at my life? If you do know, and if this is your purpose, then these

fingers would quiver with delight in tearing your very heart out. Oh, could you, you whom I have always felt to be innocent and pure, whatever else I may have thought of you, and however much I may have envied you, in the midst of your own misery, thus cruelly turn upon me?" Then overcome she sank in a chair and with her face buried in her hands gave vent to a flood of tears.

In a moment Alicia was at her side, and for the moment forgetting her own great sorrows sought to comfort the distressed woman. She almost shrieked as she pleaded: "Oh, my dear señora, do you even suspect me of being so mean. I love my husband as I love my own life, and my heart is torn with grief and fear for him, but I could not be so mean as to do what you suggest if it would save his life a thousand times over."

Tenderly she raised the head of the weeping woman, and looking her full in the face, while the tears streamed from her own eyes, she said: "You can never know how this heart of mine goes out to you, as you bow beneath a sorrow more terrible than my own," and she emphasized her words with a warm kiss imprinted upon the cheek of the now softened, gentle Spanish woman, whose only reply was an affectionate embrace.

CHAPTER XVI.

Just as the two women, as diverse in characteristics as could be imagined, drawn together by sorrows as different as daylight and darkness, were locked in each other's arms, the door opened and the haughty Alonzo entered. Señora Menendez was murmuring some words of gratitude, when he spoke. Both women were so startled that for a moment they were speechless, and when Alonzo saw who his wife's guest was, it was his turn to be agitated, and his angry tones passed into a sound that was almost unearthly.

His wife was the first to speak, and she coolly said: "Señora Olivera was telling me of her griefs and asking me to intercede to secure the release of her husband. I had promised her to speak to you, requesting you to do what you could for her. Can there be a better time than now for me to beg you to do what you can?" and she went to him, pleadingly putting her hand on his shoulder.

He seemed ready to savagely shake her hand off, but remembering himself, he asked: "What has Alicia—I mean Señora Olivera, to say for herself?" and he looked at Alicia in a sort of patronizing way which made her

whole being quiver with an indignation such as had hardly ever before been known to fire the breast of that gentle little woman; then, instantly remembering that her husband's life was in jeopardy she suppressed her indignation, and humbly besought him to intercede to save her husband to her and her children. Assuming the air of a regularly constituted court hearing the plea of "guilty" from a prisoner at the bar, he asked, "What will *you* have *me* do?"

Loathing his meanness, but determined on accomplishing her mission, if within her power, she replied, "If you please, Señor Menendez (he bit his lips), I would have you and your father go to the governor, and assure him that my husband is innocent of any conspiracy or any other crime against the government, and do all you can to secure his release. You may tell the governor that, if he will only release my husband and let him go in peace and safety, our property can be sacrificed."

"Will *you* accompany *me* to the governor?" he asked in a tone that was sarcastic in spite of his effort to make it otherwise. "I do not think I could be of the least service in that way," she calmly replied. "Oh, yes, you can," he insisted. "Then I will go, if you will go with me," she said, addressing Señora Menendez.

Looking inquiringly into his face, Señora Menendez, replied: "Yes, señora, I will go if it is agreeable."

For a moment Alonzo was silent, and then, as if recasting things in his mind: "Perhaps it would not be best to bother the governor with you women; but I would like to receive further instructions from Señora Olivera, if we can be excused a few minutes," looking at his wife.

But Alicia was instantly equal to the situation, and laying her hand on Señora Menendez's arm, she said: "Allow her to remain, I am perfectly willing for her to hear all, and want her advice and help, for you know it takes one woman to help another in some things."

The wily Spaniard felt that he had been met and defeated on his own field, and saw that he would have to entirely change his tactics. He offered to go to the governor himself, and if necessary, get his father to go, but asked Alicia where he could find her to let her know of his mission. Remembering the miserable hovel in which she lived and determined to keep the whereabouts of herself and family from him, she offered to call at his home, and she and Señora Menendez, if she would be so kind as to accompany her, could call at the Menendez company. This plan was agreed upon, but with reluctance on the part of one of the company, and Alicia immediately departed, though both the others insisted that she remain to their ten o'clock breakfast.

Again upon the street, it seemed to her that the free air had never been quite so sweet. But she had much to occupy her mind. She confessed to herself that she was entirely too weak-minded to guess what was the real purpose of either of those whom she had just left. Any way she felt fully determined to keep her own counsel, except where it was absolutely necessary to reveal some part of it.

Naturally she had, on reaching the sidewalk, at the Menendez mansion, started in the direction of her humble home, but she soon changed her mind and proceeded to a church which stood near the palace of the captain-general of the island, and by which Alonzo would naturally go, if he went to see the city governor as he had promised to do, at noon.

Once on the inside of the church, she proceeded with her prayers, but it must be confessed that it was difficult to keep her mind from wandering from her devotions. To her it seemed that the "Holy Mother" must be in a listless mood. Her prayers completed, she still lingered in the church, taking a position near the side entrance, so as to watch the street through the narrow opening between the swinging shutters.

It seemed a long waiting, but the church-bells had hardly ceased sounding the noon hour, when she heard carriage-wheels, and was happy to recognize the fine coach of the younger Menendez. Alonzo was alone, was

in full dress, and seemed in deep thought. She ventured far enough after the carriage to see that it stopped in front of the palace of the city governor.

Looking beyond the palace, she could but shudder when her eyes fell upon the dirty walls of the old fort, in one of whose filthy dungeons her husband was confined. How her heart longed to see that loved one free again!

It was now a week since the arrest of Juan, and not a word had she heard from him. The Spanish officials had persistently declined to tell him on what special charge he had been arrested. He knew it must be of a very serious character, for he was put into a dungeon whose outside walls were fifteen feet in thickness. The room into which he was thrown had known very little of fresh air since the building was erected by DeSoto, in 1538, and the filth and dampness were sufficient to shock the coarsest nature.

Day after day and night after night, he sat or lay there on that damp floor. It was very little of food or water that he took. Fear of being poisoned caused him to take only the food that was absolutely necessary to sustain life. He often tried to get word to the governor or to some other Spanish official, so that he might insist on being brought to trial for whatever charges were

against him, but the prison-keepers paid no attention to his demands.

On one evening he received a delicately prepared and tempting package of food, and was assured that it was sent by his wife. Something about it aroused his suspicions, and he hid the food away, and did not so much as taste it. He knew too much of the methods of the Spanish in "making away with" a certain class of prisoners not to have very grave suspicions.

At the appointed hour, in the afternoon, Alicia was at the Menendez mansion, and was happy to find that it was not necessary for her to call at the office. Alonzo had instructed his wife to say that the governor had agreed to look into the case immediately. Would do so the following day, and if Señora Olivera had any witnesses she wished to introduce, she must send them to the governor's palace the following day at noon.

When Alicia was ready to depart, Señora Menendez insisted that she should take her in her carriage, but the other, thanking her, firmly refused the offer. One excuse she gave was that she had several things to see after. As she passed from place to place on these errands, she became conscious that she was being watched, at least felt quite sure such was the case. Entering a church as if for devotional purposes, she immediately

passed out at a side entrance and, hasting around the corner, took a hack for the Colon Cemetery.

This brought her within about two miles of her home, and when she was there she consulted with her father as to what would be the best course to pursue as to the proposed trial for the next day. He gave her a list of the names of prominent Spanish business men with whom their firm had had much dealing, and hoped they would consent to appear as witnesses for Juan. He knew it was utterly useless to introduce Cubans as witnesses.

It was impossible for Alicia to sleep much that night because of her anxiety about Juan. She knew something of the quarters where he was confined, and felt that, even if he was not poisoned or "made away with" by some other method, he would die of disease. But as to any trial she was to be doomed to continual delays on one pretense or other.

To her great gratification she found that a number of the merchants whose names her father had given her consented to appear as witnesses for Juan. They reported to Alonzo, who informed them that it was not convenient for the governor to have the trial that day. Thus it was from time to time. One of the merchants who was a special friend to Juan, and at whose house Alicia had been calling to learn the progress of the case, ventured, after there had been several delays, to advise

her not to allow the case to remain any longer in the hands of Alonzo. Moreover, he informed her that Alonzo had been very particular to ask him where she was now making her home.

She decided to take the advice of this friend, and begged him to go with her to call on the governor. This he at first hesitated to do, but finally consented to do so, provided she would keep the fact of his connection with the case a profound secret so far as it was possible. They went to the governor, and when she was allowed an audience with him, to her amazement he talked of her husband's case as if it had not been previously mentioned to him. After looking at the record of such cases, he frankly told her that the charges against her husband were of a very serious character, and had been made by parties in high standing, still he declined to reveal either the charges or the names of the accusers. Nor would he consent for her to see the prisoner or convey anything to him, but promised to inform the friend who accompanied her at that time when the trial would take place, giving him notice a day or so before the time.

With these efforts and several days of waiting in terrible suspense, another week was exhausted, and it was time for the arrival of Martinez, and she impatiently and anxiously awaited his coming. Had she known that he was accompanied by Juanita, and of the diffi-

culties and dangers with which he had to contend, she would have been even more tormented with fears than she was. As it was, her suspense was indeed great.

The very day that she hoped he would arrive, an American steamer entered the harbor, but after diligent inquiry she became satisfied that he did not come. That evening, when she returned home, she found the elder Olivera delirious with fever. Because of the scarcity of means and from the fact that they wished to keep their hiding-place a secret, they had not called in a physician, and now they were greatly alarmed. Poor Alicia was worn out and helpless, and almost hopeless.

CHAPTER XVII.

When Juanita reached the landing, on the day of their arrival in the Havana harbor, she was truly delighted to find Señor A. Menendez at the wharf to meet her, and readily turned over the baggage-receipts to him and thankfully accepted his offer to take her up in his carriage.

She could hardly wait until they were seated in the coach to tell of the trouble which had arisen in her brother's case. He assured her that he would see after the matter, and that her brother would be safely on land not later than the following morning. Then he surprised her by telling her that her mother was not at home, but had instructed him to take her home, where she could await her mother's arrival. If her mother did not arrive that evening, then Juanita was to come and spend the night in his home.

Alonzo explained that her mother was away from the city perfecting some arrangements looking to the release of her father, and he made her forget the anxiety she had felt about her father by the cheerful way in which he spoke of the prospect of the early release of

her father, telling her that he had the matter in hand, and no means should be spared.

When they reached the house, he assisted her from the carriage as gallantly as if he had been her young sweetheart, and escorted her into the house, saying that his servant who was looking after things in the absence of her mother would remain in the house.

Juanita did not forget to thank him for his kindness, and she was happy to be in the old home again, but she did not feel at ease. She left the servant in the court, and began looking about the rooms, but she found they were not as her mother was accustomed to keep them, besides, she missed a number of things of the every-day-use variety. When her baggage arrived, she ceased her investigations and dressed herself in clothing better suited to the Cuban climate.

When her mother did not arrive, she grew restless and began to ply the servant with many questions, but he was not at all communicative. When she spoke of going out on the streets a little, he advised her not to do so, as Señor Menendez might call at any minute, and would be disappointed if she was out.

Señor Menendez did come, but to inform her that his wife had been called away from home, and would not be back until the following day, and that Juanita would

probably feel better to spend the night there than in his home, and he would send a maid over with dinner, and with instructions to spend the night with Juanita. To this Juanita consented. How could she do otherwise?

Before long the maid came with the promised dinner which Juanita enjoyed in spite of her disturbed state of mind, for she had not recovered from her seasickness at the breakfast-hour. She found the woman as little inclined to talk as the man-servant had been, and, though she felt ill at ease, she soon fell asleep after retiring. Poor girl! Little did she suspect that she was a prisoner in the house that had been her happiest home!

Martinez reached the Regla wharf about one o'clock in the morning, and as good fortune—let us say a good providence—would have it, he found some fishermen who were just preparing to cross the bay in their small boat, and they consented to carry him across, and were too tired and sleepy to be inquisitive, so by 1:30 A. M. he found himself landed safely in the city, in less than a mile of what had been his home, and to that he hurried.

The streets were deserted except some sleeping policemen here and there, but when he was within a short distance of his old home, he was surprised to see a close, one-horse coach drive up to the door and a man leave it,

go to the door, and gently use the knocker, letting it fall three times in rapid succession, and then once after a moment of waiting. Immediately the door was opened by a strange man. Martinez could see the proceedings by the light of the small lantern in the hand of the visitor.

A cold chill went over his whole frame when he saw the visitor could be none other than Alonzo Menendez. When the door closed again, he ventured close enough to the vehicle to find that no one was left in it. Then he took position behind it from the house, and impatiently awaited further developments. Hearing conversation in the house, he could not resist the temptation of stealing under the window to listen. There being no glass in the window he could hear what was being said.

There were at least two women, for he could distinguish their voices, and one was his sister, but it was evident that the other was not his mother. His sister was speaking louder than the others, and he distinctly heard her ask between heartbreaking sobs, "Señor Menendez, how did you learn about the drowning of my precious brother?"

"From a boatman who came from one of our company's steamers which was standing near where the American vessel was anchored," came the lying re-

sponse, which almost crazed the listener at the window.

The speaker continued: "His body was picked up by this same boatman and conveyed to our steamer, where they are making efforts to restore life, and with some hope of success. So soon as I heard the sad news I hurried to come for you, thinking that you would want to go to your brother immediately."

"You were right," sobbed Juanita, "and I can never thank you enough for your kindness."

"When you are ready," said the other, "we will drive to the main wharf where the boatman awaits us."

"I will be ready in a few minutes," Juanita replied.

Then Martinez saw through it all, and instantly reached a desperate decision. Evidently it would not do for him to make an attack there upon both the vile Spaniard and his servant, for they would be too much for his strength, so, with the haste of a madman, he ran toward the wharf where he was sure that he would find the boatman.

He was right in his expectation, and by the time he reached the wharf his plan of action was complete. Rushing out on the wharf to where the boatman was well hidden down in his boat, he called in a whisper: "Señor Menendez can not meet you here, and you must hurry to the second landing east. Please be quick."

Without waiting for questions, Martinez hurried back into the street.

Without suspicion, the boatman hurried away. Then Martinez stole back inside the wharf enclosure. He had found the gate for foot-passengers unlocked, and knew it must have been left so by special orders, and that it was through it Señor Menendez intended to bring Juanita. Near this gate, armed with a heavy piece of iron, he awaited the unsuspecting Alonzo. One fear haunted his mind during that awful waiting which lasted only a few minutes. He feared a servant would be brought along to look after the horse and the coach, and that the servant would arrive before he and his sister could escape.

The coach arrived, and, to the great joy of Martinez, Alonzo left the unsuspecting and grief-stricken Juanita in the coach until he could see if the boatman was in waiting, and entered the gate alone. The moment he had placed the little office by the side of the gate between himself and the coach, Martinez dealt him such a well-directed blow that he fell to the earth with a thud, letting drop the small lantern that he carried.

Without a moment of waiting, Martinez rushed out at the gate and to the carriage. A suppressed cry came from his sister when he reached her, and she was about to ask what had happened, then she saw it was not Men-

endez, but her own dear brother or his ghost. Martinez sprang in, seized the reins, and hurriedly drove away, being careful to take a street different from that which the man who was to take care of the horse would be most likely to come.

Juanita clung to her brother in great fear. He selected the loneliest way through the city to the neighborhood of the Luz wharf, and was thankful for inefficient police. Near that wharf they stopped for about one hour, until four A.M. Then they dismounted from the coach, Martinez led the horse a short distance, and turned him into a street leading toward the Menendez mansion. As soon as the people began to gather at the wharf preparatory to taking the early ferry-boat for Regla, Martinez and his sister walked to that place, and taking the boat were soon at Regla.

Fortunately Juanita had a large valise of her baggage which Señor Menendez had told her she had better take, as she might be on the steamer several days. This they carried with them when they took the train which moved out of Regla just as day was breaking.

As the train sped away, they felt a sense of relief from the awful strain through which they had passed, and Martinez unfolded his hurriedly formed plans to his sister. It was easy for them to see through the vile

scheme of the wicked Alonzo. It was now the plan of Martinez to take his sister to the factory community, leave her with Beatriz, then organize a few trusty men into a party for the rescue of his father. This must be done, and the band must be at the Morro Castle wharf by the following Saturday at midnight, at which time, he felt quite sure, it was intended to transfer his father from the old fort adjoining the city governor's palace to Morro Castle.

CHAPTER XVIII.

From Santo Domingo, Martinez and Juanita drove out to the home of Gonzalez. That family was surprised beyond measure at the coming of their young friends, but extended the warmest and most sympathetic welcome. Juanita held up bravely through the whole of the terrible ordeal, but when she found herself safe in the home of her dear friends she gave way completely, but Beatriz took her in charge, insisting that she and her mother could see to Juanita, giving Martinez and Marcos opportunity to perfect their plans for the rescue of Juan Olivera.

Martinez was happy to find that Gonzalez had already organized a small company for the rescue, but was no more happy than was Gonzalez when he learned that Martinez had so good a clue as to what disposition was to be made of the prisoner on the following Saturday night.

Beatriz had a letter from Alicia giving account of the confiscation of the property and of her vain efforts to secure the release of her husband. Fortunately this letter gave the location of the present home of Alicia

and the other relatives so that it would be easy to find them.

It was decided that it would not be safe for Martinez to go into Havana, and this settled the question as to who should lead the rescue band, an honor and a danger that was courted by both Gonzalez and Martinez. So the former went to see to the removal of Alicia and her relatives, for it would never do for them to be left where they were, whether the expedition for the release of Juan was successful or not, for Alonzo was determined on their ruin.

On the day that Martinez and Juanita escaped from the city, the papers contained the announcement that Señor A. Menendez had been found at the main wharf in a senseless condition, and had evidently been foully dealt with, as there was a bad wound on his head which must have been made with a piece of iron in the hands of a would-be assassin. His horse, attached to his coach, had been found in the street near his home. There was much mystery in the whole affair, not even his wife understanding his absence from home.

The same papers contained the announcement that Martinez Olivera, who had just returned from the United States on an American steamer, had been drowned in the Havana harbor, either from having

fallen overboard accidentally, or from having purposely leaped overboard; that the body of the young man had not yet been recovered.

The first item of news greatly distressed Alicia, and the second completely prostrated her. It did seem that her cup was indeed full, but another sorrow was to be added. It was whispered about that Juan Olivera and other prisoners confined in the dungeons of the city governor had been either poisoned or strangled to death. Two days later, when Gonzalez arrived and told what he knew, it seemed that sunlight was breaking in on her crushed heart.

It did not take long for Alicia and the others to be ready for the proposed move, for but little had been left them that was worth moving. The elder Olivera was better, and felt that, under the circumstances now so desperate, he should make an effort to go.

Because there would be much danger in crossing the bay to Regla, and from the fact that the officers of the soldiers guarding the train by Matanzas had watched Gonzalez in a way to indicate that they were very suspicious, it was deemed best for the little company to go by the line of railroad running through the center of the island, and leave the railroad at Calimete instead of venturing to go to Santo Domingo.

There was a railway-station near by, and Gonzalez put the little company on the train to go on under the care of Señor Martinez, for all had agreed that Gonzalez should remain in Havana to be ready to succor the efforts of the rescuing band should the opportunity arise. Calimete was safely reached, but too late for the party to go out to the mill community that night, but conveyances were secured, and early the next morning they were on the way. That evening they reached the Gonzalez home.

There was great joy in that home that night, and yet there was much to cause anxiety. Señor Olivera was much worse and was delirious with fever. Before the arrival of the party Juanita had become quite herself again, and she and Beatriz gave the weary and sad company a royal welcome. She was ready for any work, nursing her grandfather so tenderly that, even in his delirium, a touch of her hand would quiet his ravings. She and her mother could never finish talking and rejoicing over her fortunate escape from the clutches of the wily and vile Alonzo.

On the evening of the day that Gonzalez had left for Havana, Martinez, with his gallant little company of seven men, left in the same direction, going on horseback. They went in sections so as not to arouse any

suspicious among the people along the way. They all seemed to realize that their undertaking was of the most difficult as well as dangerous kind, and that great prudence as well as bravery was needed.

They traveled nearly all of the first night, resting much of the following day, and then riding much of the second night. On the evening of the third day, which was Saturday, they reached Guanabacoa, several miles from Havana, a short time after dark. There they secured some food for themselves and horses, and at ten o'clock they were on the way again. It was only about five miles to Morro Castle, their objective point.

At eleven o'clock they hid their horses in a deep valley just north of Regla, leaving one man to look after them. Fortunately there was no moon until after one o'clock. Martinez went some little distance in advance of his men so that they might the better avoid the sentinels between Morro and Cabañas castles. They saw one sentinel who was sound asleep, and one of the company stole up to him, and with a stroke of his machete fixed the poor fellow so that he would not interfere with their retreat.

When the bells across the bay rang out the midnight hour, the company was secreted near the Morro wharf. It was nearly one o'clock ere they saw a dim light on

a boat on the bay. It was slowly moving toward them. Before this they had begun to fear that they were to be disappointed for that night, but now they were aroused for action. As the boat neared the wharf, they could see the outlines of seven men, and a nearer approach showed that four of these were armed, two being officers. The two common soldiers were acting as oarsmen, also. The remaining three were evidently bound as prisoners.

Martinez had told his men that they must wait for his signal, and this he did not give until the whole party had left the boat, and begun the ascent toward the castle. At the proper moment he gave the signal, and instantly he and his company, with drawn machetes, rushed upon the Spaniards. The officers had their swords in their hands, and made a desperate fight, one of them making an ugly wound on Martinez' left shoulder, but their struggle was short and vain. The two common soldiers had thrown their guns down and tried to escape by running, but they were quickly dispatched. The prisoners, seeing that no effort was made to harm them, quietly awaited results.

Before the onset was made Martinez had recognized his father among the prisoners, and now they were overjoyed to meet each other, but had no time for manifest-

ing joy. Quickly, with the bayonets of the dead soldiers, the shackles were broken from the hands of the prisoners, and the arms of the Spaniards given to them.

As there had been no outcry so as to extend the alarm to the forts, Martinez thought it best that they retreat as they had come, as quietly and cautiously as possible. When the horses were reached, the two other prisoners, who proved to be two Cuban merchants, were given the choice of going on with the company or of escaping in their own way. As only one extra horse had been brought, they chose the latter course.

No time was lost. Avoiding Regla on the one side and Guanabacoa on the other, the company rode hurriedly on toward the east. Before daylight they separated into small squads, Martinez retaining Gualterio Calderin, a nephew of Gonzalez and his most trusted man, to accompany him and his father.

CHAPTER XIX.

As was noted in the Havana papers, Alonzo Menendez was found in an insensible condition. The servant who went to the wharf to bring back the horse and coach failed to find either them or their master, and supposed that Alonzo had driven to some other wharf. He, the maid, and the boatman, being all that their master had taken into the conspiracy, decided to remain silent until Alonzo was in condition to advise. They had not understood his actions, but had been instructed to obey orders without asking questions.

While diligent search had been made by the police authorities for the one who had struck down A. Menendez, the military governor of the city, for several reasons, some of which he kept to himself, decided to put off any regular investigation of the matter until Alonzo was able to appear.

It was not long until Alonzo began to return to consciousness, but almost immediately relapsed, and the physicians pronounced him dangerously ill with brain fever. His wife was greatly distressed, and spent nearly all of the time at his bedside. This soon began to tell on her who had never before known any physical hardship.

In his delirium Alonzo often called the names of Alicia and Juanita. The wife believed she knew why the first name should be called, but was mystified as to the second, especially as he often seemed pleading with Juanita to go with him. All this was too much for her, and she soon became so prostrated that the care of her husband had to be committed to other hands. This she exceedingly regretted for more than one reason.

On the morning after the rescue of the prisoners, there was great excitement in military circles, especially in the palace of the city governor, but the matter was kept from the general public. Secret messages were sent to all the military stations in the island, instructing those in command to be more on the alert. The police force in the city was increased, and the picket lines around the city were doubled. The country around Havana was more frequently scoured by forces of cavalry.

Gonzalez, hidden in an old fisherman hut, had watched the departure of the little boat with the prisoners and soldiers, and, not seeing any way in which he could render any assistance to the rescuers, hurried away so as not to rest under suspicion when discovery of the rescue was made. The next day he learned from a Spanish friend and one who was intimate with some of

the military officers that some prisoners had been released, but he was unable to learn the names of the prisoners. Nor could he learn whether Juan was still living or not.

On Monday morning Gonzalez took the train at a small station outside of the city, and that evening reached Calimete. The next day he reached home to find that a company of Spanish cavalry had the day before visited his plantation and had left warning that he was not to give the least help or comfort to the Cuban insurgents, who were becoming numerous in the Santa Clara Province.

On Tuesday some of the rescuing party arrived, and reported the happy success of their mission. From imprisonment and starvation Juan was too weak to make good speed, so he, Martinez, and Gualterio Calderin had to come by slower stages. They did not arrive until Wednesday evening, but when they did come, it was a time of great rejoicing. Alicia and Juanita were happy beyond all power of expression. Juan was received, as Martinez had previously been, as one come back from the dead.

The life of the elder Olivera had been despaired of, but by the faithful and efficient nursing of Juanita and her mother, he was now rapidly improving. Martinez

had had a serious time with the wound that the Spanish officer gave him. In the hurry and excitement of that early morning, the wound had been forgotten, and when daylight came his father was horrified to see his son's shoulder covered with blood. As soon as some water was reached, the wound was washed and bandaged as well as possible under the circumstances. It was much better by the time they reached the mill community.

The whole island was becoming more and more disturbed, and there were uprisings in many places, especially in the country districts. Several important engagements between the Spanish and the larger bands of the Cubans had occurred. The uprising was the most general that had yet been witnessed in the island.

Spain had failed to put in force the most of the concessions agreed upon at the close of the "Ten Years War," and had failed to keep many of her other promises. Cuba was being taxed beyond all endurance, and yet had no voice in the questions as to what the revenues should be. All the laws for Cuba were made in Spain; the tax-rates were made out there, and Cuba had to "foot the bill." The important government offices in Cuba were filled by Spaniards, and at enormous salaries, running from \$50,000 paid to the captain-general, besides

heavy perquisites, down to \$7,000 paid many minor officers.

In the Church, the condition was even more outrageous. The Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba and the Bishop of Havana received, each, \$18,000 annually, besides fees that amounted to several thousand more. All the more important places in the Church were filled by native Spaniards. Besides, many of the priests, the great majority of them, indeed, were indolent, and so controlled by greed for money that the fees charged for marriage and funeral ceremonies made it well-nigh impossible for the poorer Cubans to be legally married or to have their dead buried in a decent manner. Many of the poor people were living together as husbands and wives who had never been legally married. It was common for the dead of the poor to be carried to the cemeteries in hired coffins, and dumped into holes without ceremony, sometimes several bodies being put in the same hole. The priests and bishops largely controlled the burial space.

The war-cloud darkened, and it was soon very evident to Juan that he and his relatives were not safe at San Marcos, besides, he felt that it was not right that they should subject the estate of Gonzalez to the danger which their residence there would cause. That person had

already made noble sacrifices for them. Moreover, Juan's mind was fully made up to join the Cuban army and give his strength, life, if need be, to the cause of Cuba.

After consultation, it was decided that the families should be moved to the mountains of the Santa Clara Province. They had managed to save a little money from confiscation, and they could probably manage to live until the war was over and Cuba was free.

In a few days ox-carts sufficient to carry their effects, the women, and the old men were ready, and bidding farewell to the Gonzalez family they started by slow marches, avoiding the larger towns. They finally settled in a village, Nazareno, not far from the mountain village where they once lived, and where Martinez and Juanita were born.

It was a trial to Juan to make known to his wife his purpose of joining the army, but he was prouder of her than ever before, when, though she could not keep back the tears nor very successfully control her voice, she said, "It is hard to give you up, and we will have a great struggle to get along without you, but the cause in which you go is noble and righteous, and we should gladly suffer for such a cause."

When Juan spoke to Martinez of his purpose, the

young man said with much earnestness, "I am sorry for you to leave mother and sister. I had hoped that you could stay with them and the old people, and let me be the offering that our family should make to freedom's cause, but your mind is made up, and I must claim the privilege of bearing you company." This caused Juan the hardest struggle of any of its kind he had been called on to bear, but Martinez held firm to his purpose.

When Juanita was told of the determination of her father and brother she and her mother bore it as bravely as could have been asked. Though she looked through tears, Juanita saw in her father and brother two as noble heroes and patriots as she ever hoped to see. It was with something akin to awe that she gazed upon them arrayed in the simple uniform worn by the poverty-stricken Cuban insurgents.

In preparation Martinez had outstripped his father, for at the time his father had made known his purpose of joining the army, Martinez had already received the promise of some thirty men toward a company. The seven men who accompanied him on the rescue expedition were among the number. These, with the others who were added before the day of starting, unanimously chose Juan Olivera as their captain, and successfully insisted that Martinez must be only second in command.

CHAPTER XX.

In the early spring of 1895, Antonio Maceo had landed with a small force in the eastern end of the island, in the Province of Santiago de Cuba, and was soon followed by Generals Jose Marti and Maximo Gomez. A republic was proclaimed, and the news spread rapidly over the whole island. Thousands of Cubans flocked to these trusted leaders, and soon they found themselves at the head of a respectable army. Most of these volunteers were armed with their own guns and machetes, and were undisciplined, but they had enthusiasm and a good cause.

It was about the middle of May when Juan and his company reached the army of the insurgents. It was then operating in about the center of the Province of Santiago de Cuba. They were gladly received, and as Juan was well known to General Marti he and his company were assigned to an important and responsible place. Only a few days after their arrival there was an engagement, May 19th, at Dosh Rios.

In this battle General Marti was killed. This was a great grief to Juan and Martinez. General Gomez was now chief in command, and steadily moved on toward

the west. The Spanish captain-general of the island, Martinez Campos, tried to stop the advance at the eastern line of the Province of Puerto Principe, but failed, his forces being routed at Bayamo, in July. In this battle, Juan and his company as body-guard to General Antonio Maceo distinguished themselves for bravery.

The great trocha, a war-ditch extending entirely across the island in the west part of Puerto Principe, was by and by successfully passed, the main force of the Spaniards withdrawing to Cienfuegos, on the south coast of the Santa Clara Province. Once in that province, the insurgents received many reinforcements.

After an absence of about four months, Juan and Martinez were allowed to spend a few days at home, as the insurgent army had advanced into the province of Santa Clara and was in the neighborhood of Nazareno. There is no way to tell the full joy of that meeting and of the season which followed. The hardships endured by the soldiers and the almost equal self-denial practiced by those at home made the season only the happier, and it seemed only too brief. Alicia and Juanita were out one day to see many of the Cuban forces pass on toward the Province of Matanzas. The next day they again bade their loved ones good-by.

General Gomez had adopted daring measures, and his

soldiers were using all their energies to carry them into effect. A Cuban government had been established, taking the form of a republic. Much of the country districts of the provinces passed through was in the hands of the insurgents.

General Gomez sent out a proclamation over the island warning the owners of sugar-plantations and factories not to gather nor manufacture the sugar-cane crops. For this Gomez was condemned by many of the lookers-on among the nations, but it was meant as an extreme measure to weaken Spain. Much of Spain's revenue from Cuba came from the sugar-cane crops, and if thus cut off, the already bankrupt government would be much crippled.

At first the captain-general, Compos, regarded this proclamation as a huge joke, but he and all Spain were soon made to feel that it was a most serious matter. Gomez warned the planters that if they did not obey, the penalty would be the destruction of their mills and crops, and sent out his cavalry as far as possible to enforce his orders.

The planters were placed in a very trying position. If they obeyed the order then the Spanish would count them as sympathizers with the insurgents and destroy their estates, while, if they failed to obey the order, their

estates would be in constant danger of destruction by the Cubans. They were literally and emphatically "between two fires."

Gonzalez, being in warmest sympathy with the insurgents, quickly decided to obey the proclamation. He did not have to wait very long for the Spanish alternative, for a regiment was sent out from Santo Domingo and completely destroyed his estate. He saw, in one short day, \$170,000 go up in smoke. Then he was barely allowed to escape with his life.

Beatriz and her mother were allowed to save but little from their elegant home. There was hardly a cabin left to shelter them for the night. When the Spanish soldiers were gone from the community, Gonzalez gathered together what little he could find, and as there were no longer reasons for him, his mother, and sister to remain there, he determined to move to a place of greater security.

In casting about in their minds as to what direction they would take, they very naturally thought of the mountain village where their good friends were living, and immediately and unanimously decided to go to Nazareno.

This was a long and severe trip for the old mother, who was almost crushed by the awful blow which had

fallen upon them. Out of the remains of some badly damaged volantes Gonzalez constructed one in which his mother and sister could ride. By the help of a servant who rode the horse attached to the rude vehicle, they were able to progress slowly.

A Spaniard whom Gonzalez had given employment in his factory waited until he had learned the plan of his employer, and then went on to Santo Domingo and reported that Gonzalez was moving his mother and sister to the mountains so that he himself could join the insurgent army.

Just as the little party was starting for a second day's journey toward their destination, they were charged upon by a band of Spanish soldiers who arrested Gonzalez and hurried him away without giving him time to say good-by to his mother and sister. This was indeed a terrible blow to his loved ones. Beatriz, almost forgetting her own grief in her efforts to cheer her mother, bravely drove forward toward their destination.

Their arrival at Nazareno was a great surprise to their friends, whose distress hardly knew any bounds when they learned all that had happened to the Gonzalez family. Alicia and Juanita left nothing undone which it was in their power to do calculated to make their friends comfortable, but one sorrow too many had been

added to the cup of Señora Gonzalez in her age and feebleness. She was sinking under this last cruel blow.

The very night of their arrival at the humble home of the Oliveras a fever set in, and by the next morning she was in a critical condition. Her friends and her distressed daughter gave her every possible attention, vying with each other as to who should do the most, but before the day closed they began to feel that their efforts were well-nigh vain. She became delirious at times, during which her cries were distressing in the extreme.

At one time she would call her son to look at the blaze of their burning factory and home. Then she would plead with the Spanish to spare her son, her only son, and the support of her old age! The patient watchers felt too heart-sick to try to comfort each other. Juanita found herself thanking God, and very much like a Protestant, too, that her father and brother were battling against a foe who was so cruel as the Spaniard.

When the darkness of the evening came on, Señora Gonzalez grew strangely calm, and asked Alicia if they had heard any news from Marcos. When answered in the negative, she sighed and said: "I would love to see the precious boy again, and know that he was free from the wicked Spaniard. I would tell him he could do what he has so often begged me to consent for him to

do." Alicia ventured to ask what that was, and the other quickly replied, "I would tell him to join the insurgents and battle for Cuba's freedom."

While she was speaking in this strain, Juanita came in very much excited, and whispered to her mother and Beatriz that Señors Gonzalez and Martinez had come. They looked at each other and then at Señora Gonzalez, whose eyes were closed while her lips moved as if in prayer.

Alicia whispered to Beatriz, who immediately retired followed by Juanita. She went to prepare her brother for what awaited him. What a mingling of joy and sorrow there was in that meeting! She was overjoyed to see her brother free again, and could hardly refrain from embracing the brave young Martinez when she learned he had led the band which rescued her brother.

Again Señora Gonzalez opened her eyes and looked around. Seeing no one but Alicia, she said: "Oh, I thought Marcos had come."

"So he has," said Alicia, who had been wondering how she would break the news to the mother.

"Then please tell him to come here for his mother's parting blessing." At that moment Beatriz appeared at the door, and was surprised to have Alicia say, "Tell your brother that his mother says for him to come to her."

When Marcos came in and saw his mother looking so composed, he could hardly believe what his sister had told him. His mother faintly smiled and held up her hands to him, exclaiming, "The Holy Mother be praised that my son is free again!"

As she folded him in her arms and imprinted tender kisses upon his cheeks, she asked him to sit down close by her bedside.

At this moment, seeing the noble young Martinez appear at the door, she held out her trembling hand to him. When she had greeted him, her son told her that it was Martinez who had bravely rescued him from the Spanish soldiers. Then she took Martinez, and drawing him close down to her and placing her other hand upon his head, said, "God bless you, my brave lad!"

Releasing the hand of Martinez, she took that of her son, saying, "The one who has kept you from going into the army to battle for your country will soon release you from further care of her. Be as true to your country as you have been to your mother, and your duty will be done." Then, blessing her now weeping children and lovingly thanking Alicia and Juanita for their many kindnesses, she calmly closed her eyes. For a few moments her lips slowly moved, and then they stopped, and she was gone.

CHAPTER XXI.

The brother and sister were kneeling side by side at the bed. They seemed to feel that it would be mockery to give boisterous expression to their grief in the presence of a death so calm as that. Alicia, feeling that the sorrow of the loving children was at that moment too sacred for even their dearest friends to witness, motioned to Martinez and Juanita and they followed her out of the room.

The precious body, worn by age and bruised by sorrow, was quietly laid to rest in the village cemetery to await the resurrection morn. The grief-stricken children now felt they were more to each other than ever before, and when Marcos told his sister of his determination to raise a company and join the insurgents, she begged him to allow her to go with him to nurse the sick and wounded. He generously thanked her for this fresh proof that she was a kindred spirit, but told her that now, while the Cuban forces were hurrying from one place to another, this would be impossible. However, he hoped that Cuba's cause would so prosper that soon the insurgents would be able to have hospitals where the noble and patriotic women might prove their devotion to the cause.

The village was too near to Santa Clara, the capital of the province of that name, for Gonzalez and Martinez to remain there in safety, besides, they were needed elsewhere, so Martinez hurried back to his command, while the other went back to his plantation to try to raise a company of soldiers among his employees.

At the mansion of Alonzo Menendez there were weeks of suspense. Sometimes the physicians felt sure that the patient would recover, then again complications would set in that made them exceedingly doubtful. They were greatly mystified by the strange words and conduct of their patient in his delirium. Señora Menendez guessed at the state of things, and for that reason the more earnestly insisted that she be allowed to stay at his bedside.

When the physicians became alarmed because of symptoms indicating the giving away of the mind, they earnestly urged his wife to commit the nursing entirely to the trained nurses who had been secured, but she, divining their fears, only the more persistently pleaded that she must at least be permitted to remain in the same room with him.

Thus the weeks and weeks slowly dragged on, and then the symptoms became more favorable, and the patient began slowly to improve. Finally he was able to

leave his room, but the doctors absolutely forbade his undertaking to attend to any business, and advised that he go abroad for at least a short stay.

His wife, very unexpectedly coming into his room one day, found Alonzo very earnestly questioning one of the men-servants. It turned out to be the same one who was at the Olivera home on the night of Juanita's escape. Before he had noticed his wife's presence, she heard him ask if it had ever been ascertained what had become of Juanita.

Alonzo had been assured that there could hardly be any mistake about the drowning of Martinez. He had also been told that it was commonly reported that Juan had died in prison or had been disposed of in some way. These bits of gossip gave him much satisfaction, but he was remarkably anxious to know the whereabouts of Alicia and Juanita, and the jealous wife knew his anxiety, and favored the going abroad which the doctors advised.

Alonzo and his wife made a short visit to Spain, and he begged her to remain there until the war-cloud in Cuba should blow over, but she resolutely insisted on returning with him. Soon after their return, Alonzo visited Cienfuegos, and, as it was exceedingly unsafe for one of his prominence to travel through the country, he

sent a man to the plantation of Gonzalez to learn, if possible, the whereabouts of the Oliveras, but he was disappointed.

He knew of the proclamation of Gomez warning the planters not to manufacture their cane-crops, and he asked his spy very particularly as to whether Gonzalez was making any preparation to start his factory or not, and learned that nothing of the kind was being done, though the cane was ripening in the fields. He had always regarded Señor M. Gonzalez with suspicion, and now he was fully convinced that he was at least a Cuban sympathizer, and so he wrote the military authorities at Santo Domingo.

It was reported at Cienfuegos that General Gomez had advanced into the Province of Mantanzas, and was pushing on toward Havana, and Alonzo hurried home. He was much chagrined at his lack of success in his earnest search. Had he even dreamed that his wife guessed the cause of his ill-humor and general depression, he would have been still more depressed. She was thoroughly aroused and jealously watched his every movement.

When Gonzalez reached the neighborhood of his plantation he found many of his old employees lingering in the community. They did not know what to do. He

went among them cautiously, and soon learned that a majority of them would join his company if he could do something toward providing for their families. He did all he could, and that was to authorize them to build huts and grow what they could on his plantation.

He was surprised to hear that the Spanish employee previously mentioned had come back to the plantation, and claimed that he had been sent there by the Spanish authorities to take charge of the plantation. He was again missing, and when Gonzalez learned that he had gone away in the direction of Santo Domingo, he guessed his purpose. Hurriedly gathering his company together and arming them as best he could, he led them out several miles in the direction of Santo Domingo. There he placed them in ambuscade along the roadside to await further developments.

This was done the day after the departure of the Spaniard, and they did not have long to wait. About noon a company of Spanish cavalry came riding unsuspectingly along, this same Spaniard in the lead. At a given signal from Gonzalez, all of his men who had guns or pistols fired, and then all rushed upon the Spanish with their large butcher-knives which they used in cutting sugar-cane on the plantation, and yelling "el machete," after the custom of the Cuban cavalry.

Many of the Spaniards were killed, the treacherous former employee being among the first who were slain, and the balance were completely routed, the most of them throwing away their arms, leaping from their horses, and disappearing in the brush. Not one of the men of Gonzalez was seriously hurt.

The captured horses made up the lack of the company in that particular, and the ammunition and arms supplied present need; so they hastened on to join the insurgent army which was pressing on toward Havana.

General Gomez received Gonzalez cordially, and was much interested and pleased with his account of the little fight and was much disposed to make him and his company special scouts for that part of the Santa Clara Province. But when Gonzalez insisted that both he and his company were raw in army service and needed some training first, he consented to have them remain with his army for the present.

Gomez and Antonio Maceo separated, the latter pressing on westward into the Province of Pinar del Rio, sweeping over the whole face of that province, capturing all of its principal towns except the capital. In each captured town the insurgent republic was proclaimed, a mayor and council elected and given the oath of allegiance to that government. A strong force of Spanish

were sent in pursuit of him, and many engagements, some of considerable importance, took place, but Maceo usually outwitted the Spanish, fighting them only when he could do so to his own advantage.

In a severe engagement near Pinar del Rio city, while in the thickest of the fight, Juan was shot down, a ball passing through his right breast. A few minutes later the insurgents were forced back, and as the Spanish rushed up the hill by where Juan lay bleeding, some of them saw him and cried out, "Kill him, he is a general!" A soldier with presented bayonet rushed upon him and was just ready to finish him when a vigorous charge of the insurgent forces hurled the Spanish back.

Martinez, now in command of the company, had his father borne to the rear, and as soon as he could be relieved from his active duties which his father urged that he must not neglect to care for even a wounded father, he was at his father's side.

General Maceo was pained to find that the captain of his body-guard was so severely wounded, and ordered that Juan should have the best attention which could be given under the circumstances, but very soon Maceo found that his little army was being surrounded by the far superior force of the Spanish, and had to retreat in great haste, leaving Juan in the hands of the enemy.

In the desperate fighting that took place at the time, it required all the energies of Martinez and his brave company to protect their commander from death. Thus Martinez was separated from his father.

CHAPTER XXII.

Juan was carried into Pinar del Rio city and placed in the Spanish hospital. In this he was far more fortunate than he would have been in the temporary Cuban hospital at Paso Real, where all the inmates (about thirty) were butchered by the Spanish soldiers.

When he became convalescent he was sent to Havana, and confined in Morro Castle with many other prisoners, all civil "suspects," arrested on the orders of General Weyler, "the butcher," who had been made captain-general, arriving in Havana February 10, 1896, General Campos having signally failed to put down the "rebellion," as he loved to call it.

Juan, with more than one hundred others, was confined in a gloomy, damp cell measuring about twenty by one hundred feet. He had nothing but the damp, filthy floor on which to sit or sleep, and his food, of the poorest kind, was thrown to him as if he had been a dog. Water from filthy cans which had contained kerosene oil was given them only twice a day. But this was better treatment than was accorded some soldiers who were prisoners. It seemed sure death if long continued, even to a well man, and to a man with a severe wound not healed it was indeed alarming.

It was a mystery to Juan why he, a soldier, should be confined with citizen prisoners. The mystery was somewhat dissipated a few days later by a visit from his ever diligent, cruel, and undying enemy, Alonzo Menendez. Alonzo pretended to have great sympathy for him, and had actually brought him some tempting-looking food, but Juan did not dare to eat it lest he should be poisoned.

Alonzo had the astounding brazenness to tell Juan how he had, on the solicitation of Señora Olivera, undertaken to secure his release when he was formerly arrested as a "suspect," and would have succeeded but for his own serious hurt and long illness. Then he expressed sympathy with Juan in the drowning of his son. Juan was glad that it was too dark for Alonzo to see the grim smile which overspread his face at the last expression.

There was much circumlocution on the part of the Spaniard, but he finally got around to one of the true objects of his visit. He asked Juan how he had been released from his former imprisonment, and was quickly answered that it was by the interference of some of his friends. The other looked puzzled, but he did not ask for particulars.

Then there was another lengthy, tedious circumlocu-

tion, and he suddenly said, "I hope that Señora Olivera and your charming daughter are well."

"I would hope so myself, but I do not know, as I have not heard from them in a long time," Juan quietly replied.

"I suppose they are not in Havana," stammered Alonzo, and was answered by, "I do not think they are."

Then followed several efforts to secure the information that the wicked Spaniard most desired—at least some clue to it—but it was evident to even a casual observer that the interview was anything but satisfactory to him. After offering to see if more comfortable quarters could be secured for the prisoner, and promising that at least something for him to sleep upon should be sent, he retired.

Juan thought it severe enough that he should be confined in those filthy, disease-generating quarters, but why he should be haunted by this scoundrel who would rejoice to accomplish his ruin and that of his family at any sacrifice of honor, was utterly inconceivable to him. This time Alonzo had evidently been defeated, but had most surely gone away to plan some other method of attack. Another thing was very evident, and that was, he was no ordinary antagonist.

The clouds over poor Cuba were darkening. Another

one of her great leaders had been struck down. It was the active and heroic Antonio Maceo. From a second round of the Province of Pinar del Rio he had returned to the Province of Havana. Just after crossing into the latter province he was killed and, as Martinez Olivera will always believe, by the hand of a traitorous assassin. Martinez and some of the best men of his company had been sent by Maceo to Gomez to carry the news that Maceo and his command had safely returned to the Havana Province, and were ready to co-operate with General Gomez. The sad news of the fall of Maceo soon followed him.

Martinez was almost crushed by this blow. He had often risked his life for his general, who had learned to love and trust his youthful captain. Martinez had felt some strange forebodings when he was trusted with this important and dangerous mission, and would have asked General Maceo to send some one else, but that might seem an effort to evade duty.

General Gomez sent some special instructions by Martinez to one now in command of the division of which Maceo had been the leader. It was not long before Martinez and his company were ordered to report at the headquarters of General Gomez. The general had been pleased with the conduct of that young officer, had noted

his grief at the news of the death of his commander, and had asked Gonzalez particularly about him.

Gonzalez had told General Gomez many things about the exploits of the gallant young captain, not forgetting the incident of the rescue of Juan Olivera at Morro Castle. This last incident seemed to greatly interest the general, and he determined to put Martinez in charge of some very important scout and courier service.

Gonzalez with his company was sent to look after the sugar-cane estates in the vicinity of Santo Domingo. The sugar-making season having come in again, Gomez was determined, as far as possible, to prevent the manufacture of the cane. The cruel order for the concentration of the country population in the fortified cities now being enforced by General Weyler also helped to prevent the manufacture of the cane.

By order of "Butcher" Weyler the people of the country districts, the villages, and small towns were made to come into the fortified towns and cities, and were to remain, whether they had any means of support or not. The consequence was that thousands, yea, hundreds of thousands, of them were soon in a starving condition.

Under this order the families of Martinez and the Oliveras, and Beatriz Gonzalez, were hurried away on short notice to Santo Domingo, where were soon crowded

together about seven thousand of the "*reconcentrados*," as they are now known all over the civilized world. The most of these were old men and the women and the children. Beatriz had been able to conceal a little money which her brother had saved, and with a part of this they hired a little hut, and all of them huddled into this at night and during the heat of the day. Miserable as was this accommodation, it was better than thousands and thousands of others had.

The little money they had soon began to run alarmingly low, though they bought the coarsest of food, and just sufficient of that to sustain life. Already many around them were dying of disease and starvation. Beatriz and Juanita were busy much of the daytime visiting and helping the sick and the dying ones, and often watched by the dying at night. They would often take of the share of the food allowed them and divide it with the starving ones. Alicia, as far as she could spare the time from her parents and the elder Oliveras, all of whom were already prostrated, helped in these works of mercy and self-denial.

But the joy of helping others was not to be allowed them any longer. The money was all gone, and the supply of food nearly exhausted. Their strength was nearly gone too. The old people were rapidly growing

weaker and it took all the strength of the others to nurse them.

Gonzalez, when sent with his company to scour the country around Santo Domingo, had hurried away to Nazareno, hoping to reach there before his sister and friends should be carried into some fortified town, but he was too late. From the few people who were hiding about the village, he learned that those whom he sought had been taken into Santo Domingo.

A few days later than this, General Gomez sent Martinez with a company of twenty-five men from his company to bear some special documents to the Cuban government authorities, then assembled at Cubitas, on the mountains in the central portion of the Province of Puerto Rico. This was no mild undertaking, but he gladly obeyed, as it took him directly by his home from which he had not heard any very definite news in about a year. Alas, he too was to be sadly disappointed. When he reached Nazareno he found it deserted and most of its houses burned. He supposed his loved ones had been driven away to some fortified town.

Martinez accomplished his mission to Cubitas, and then was intrusted with some important papers for Gomez and immediately started on the return. Travel through the country had grown more perilous, and he did

not dare to travel much during daylight. Then it was almost impossible to secure food for themselves and horses. Sometimes they were so fortunate as to secure a pig or calf, and then they had a feast indeed.

Hoping that he might find some trace of his loved ones, Martinez determined to return by the village where his father and mother formerly lived and where he and Juanita were born. He found a few people there, but they were expecting at any hour to be hurried away to Trinidad or some other fortified town. He reached there one morning just before day, and securing some food the men had dismounted and were busy eating. Some of the exhausted soldiers had fallen asleep on the ground. Thus they unwisely lingered until daylight.

At the time of their arrival, had they seen one of the natives slink away and then hurry in the direction of Trinidad, only about eight miles distant, they would have been more cautious. Martinez, in his great anxiety to learn something of those whom he sought, had lost much of his usual prudence and watchfulness.

Suddenly, on looking out at the door of a little cabin where he was conversing with one of the old friends of his father, he saw a large company of Spanish charging down upon him and his men. He barely had time to arouse the sleeping men and mount before the Spaniards

were upon them, rapidly firing with their Mauser rifles. He ordered his men to return the fire and then to retreat, as they would certainly be overpowered by far superior numbers. The shots were flying thick about him, but he was using his revolver with deadly effect. The advancing enemy hesitated.

When Martinez turned for retreat he was astounded to see many Spaniards coming from the other direction, hurrying to cut off retreat. "El machete, and charge!" was his cry, and he and his men dashed directly upon the enemy. In a moment there was the clash of machete and saber, and before the other company of the Spaniards could come to the help of their comrades, the latter were struck down or driven before the charging Cubans.

Martinez and his men escaped without serious wounds, which seemed truly miraculous. They lost several horses, but found horses from which the flanking company of Spanish had dismounted, and secured all they needed.

Martinez upbraided himself for his imprudence, and the more so because of the important document which he carried. It was only the badly planned attack of the enemy that saved him and his men from being annihilated. The first mistake of the Spanish was their dismounting, and the second was the arranging of the flanking company so that they did not dare fire at the Cubans lest they should kill their fellow soldiers.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was really victory on the side of the Cubans, though they had to retreat. They found much with the captured horses of the Spaniards which was badly needed. But it was victory at a terrible risk, and they—at least their leader did—learned wisdom by the dangerous experience.

On the return to the Matanzas Province where General Gomez was, Martinez fortunately met Gonzalez and learned from him of the probable whereabouts of his mother and the others. Oh, how he and Gonzalez longed for force sufficient to capture the town of Santo Domingo! A Frenchman, Antonio Hernandez, who had escaped recently from that town, was found in a starving condition by Gonzalez. He gave a most distressing account of the suffering among the *reconcentrados* there. Several men who tried to escape when he did were shot down like so many dogs.

Gonzalez and Martinez were fearless soldiers, but they could not restrain from tears as they talked of the probable suffering of their loved ones. It was indeed a cruel war that called for such suffering among inno-

cent women and children. When these friends parted, two determinations filled their souls as never before. They would fight more desperately for Cuba's freedom from such a tyranny, and they would never complain of the hardships they were called on to bear.

It may be safely said that at least one man in the company of Martinez was equally stirred by the sad news concerning the loved ones of his brave and honored captain. That was the one who had become first lieutenant when Martinez was made captain in his father's stead. His name was Gualterio Calderin, the nephew of Gonzalez, who was visiting his uncle at the time the band was organized to undertake the rescue of Juan. At that time he met Juanita for the first time. Then an interest had sprung up in his heart, and after his return from the rescue, he fell a complete captive to her charms.

Gualterio was even more desperate in his determination than was either of the other distressed ones. If he could only be free from his command for a little while, he would undertake what the world would call madness. He would go through the Spanish lines into Santo Domingo and learn what was the real condition of Juanita and the others.

Gomez expressed himself as greatly pleased with the success of the trip made by Martinez, and was delighted to see the company of men better armed and mounted than they were when they had started. These things helped him to fully make up his mind to what he had before been contemplating, namely, to have Martinez select twenty-five of the best men of his company to use as a detail for operating along the railroad from Matanzas by Jovellanos to Santo Domingo, and even to Cienfuegos, on the south coast, should necessity arise.

Martinez was grateful to have his commander commit to him a task so important and dangerous, and immediately chose the twenty-five men who had accompanied him to Cubitas, though there were others of his company who were anxious to be chosen.

It was explained to him that his duties were distinct from those of Gonzalez and his company, for those of the latter were to look after sugar-plantations, while he was to watch the railroad operations, interfering as much as possible with the movement of the trains, capturing all the supplies possible, and to prevent the excursion of small bands of the Spanish from the fortified towns. He went to his task with an enthusiasm that more than ever delighted his general, and his enthusiasm was not a whit greater than that of Gualterio Calderin.

How happy Juan, as he languished in prison, would have been to know that such honor was being bestowed upon his son, and that it was worthily received! How indescribably sad he would have been had he known of the suffering of the dear ones at Santo Domingo! He did not dream that their condition was even more critical and deplorable than his own.

In a few days after his first call Alonzo made another. This time he not only brought some refreshments, but had a cot sent in and insisted that Juan should use it, and Juan thankfully consented to do so, for he had suffered much from his unhealed wound in lying on the stone floor.

This last act of Alonzo touched Juan, and began to make him feel that may be he had judged the Spaniard too harshly. He was ashamed that he had been afraid to eat the food which was brought on the first visit, and was about to make up his mind to eat what was brought at this time.

Alonzo had news that was alarming to Juan. He had failed to accomplish anything in the prisoner's behalf with Captain-General Blanco, who had succeeded Weyler in the government of the island. Had found that he was to be tried on the former charges made against him as a "suspect." If found guilty he would

be executed or deported to be imprisoned for life on the coasts of Africa. Juan noticed that he was being closely watched by Alonzo while these things were being revealed, and that helped him to put on a more stolid appearance.

One time Juan was glad to have this hated Spaniard refer to Alicia and Juanita, for he had learned of Weyler's wicked concentration scheme and of the suffering it was causing, and was fearing that his loved ones were among those who were starving. He frankly confessed that he knew nothing of his family's whereabouts, and asked Alonzo if the reports about the great suffering caused by the concentration order were true. He was answered in the affirmative.

This news caused a momentary struggle in his mind, and the other could but notice the signs of it. He was tempted to tell Alonzo where Alicia and the others had been taken from the mill community, and to ask him to search for them among the *reconcentrados*. The struggle was terrible, but it was soon over, and he had decided that death by starvation would be comfortable to Alicia or Juanita as compared to being in the power of that vile Spaniard.

This visit of Alonzo was but little more satisfactory to himself than had been the former. He had learned

one thing. It was evident that Juan's family had been taken to some country place, for it could be seen from the questions asked that Juan feared they were among the *reconcentrados*. This caused him to renew his search for them.

Candid dealing with the readers of this story requires that they now be caused to look upon the most harrowing scenes yet brought to view, but neither this writer nor any other has power to overdraw the picture as presented by the reality.

The condition of the starving ones at Santo Domingo grew more and more terrible. Their food was entirely exhausted, and Alicia, Beatriz, and Juanita were the only ones of their party who had strength to stand upon their feet. Señor Olivera had succumbed to hunger and disease, and his wife was in the last throes of death, but was still pleading for food, as were Alicia's father and mother, who were also sinking.

With an agony that almost drove them mad and did give them superhuman strength, Beatriz and Juanita almost fled from the scene in search of food. They went to what remained of the stores to be told that nothing could be given them. Then they dragged themselves to the authorities of the city and begged, not for themselves, though they knew they were starving, but

for their loved ones, and there they were rudely turned away.

They determined to seek the commander of the post, and started for that purpose. As they passed the railroad station, they saw the train was just coming in. They went to it, and holding out their pale, thin hands beseechingly, begged of the few men who were in the train. They were rewarded with a few cents, and one man gave them the luncheon that he was just in the act of eating.

An elegantly dressed man was sitting at the rear end of the first-class coach, and when Juanita held up her wasted hand to him, he indifferently turned his head away and did not seem to notice the half-suppressed shriek which escaped the beggar, and did not see her as she fled as if pursued by a fiend of hell.

Beatriz followed the frightened one as best she could, and with the fear that the poor girl had become crazed by hunger and her anxiety for others. When they were well away from the train, Juanita sat down, rather fell to the ground, and trembling from head to foot, awaited Beatriz. When Beatriz approached, the poor, frightened girl looked up and exclaimed in a whisper, "Oh, was it not awful!"

"What?" asked the other, feeling Juanita's mind was

indeed giving way under the fearful strain to which it was being subjected.

As Juanita seemed to hesitate for a reply, Beatriz assisted her to her feet, and putting her arm about her, tenderly said, "Never mind, *una cara*, we have a little food for the dying ones, thank God." Then they silently proceeded.

As they returned home, they went by the market, if market it could now be called, and gave all the money they had for what seemed a very small amount of food. All this time Juanita seemed in a dazed state, but when they neared the hut she convulsively threw her arms around Beatriz's neck and whispered, "*I must tell you before I see mamma.*"

"What is it, dear, that you must tell me?" gently inquired Beatriz.

"Oh, I saw that monster, Alonzo Menendez," was the half-shrieked reply; and she looked behind her as if she felt he was pursuing them. Then she asked, "Dear Beatriz, must I tell mamma?"

"No, no!" whispered Beatriz, who had seen Alicia appear in the door of the hut.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Another Christmas had come. "The Butcher" Weyler had been recalled to Spain and General Blanco had been made captain-general of the island. The people of the United States were showing more and more sympathy for suffering Cuba. The popular feeling had run so high that it was difficult for the government to prevent an outburst. Blanco had proposed to adopt a milder policy than that of Weyler, but he was slow about it, while thousands, yea hundreds of thousands, of people were starving and dying of disease brought on by hunger.

Sources whence to secure recruits and supplies of provisions and horses for the Cuban army General Gomez found were becoming fewer and fewer. Then it was impossible for him to keep up the spirit of his soldiers when many of them knew that their loved ones for whom they fought were starving to death within the fortified lines of the Spanish. The situation was indeed most unhappy and desperate.

In the meantime Gonzalez and Martinez, with their men were doing much brave work for the sinking cause.

The former had destroyed numbers of sugar-factories whose proprietors had dared disobey the orders of General Gomez. Some of these were so near to Cienfuegos that the smoke of the burning buildings and cane-fields hovered like a pall over that city.

So efficient had been the service rendered by Martinez and his brave band that it had become impossible for the Spanish to run their trains without great risk. Trains were thrown from the track in various ways, their guards killed, and large supplies of food and ammunition secured.

Gualterio had disguised himself and had evaded the guards and gone into Matanzas, his home city, and through his sisters had secured valuable information. More than that, he arranged a plan by which his sisters could signal to him. Their home was far up the hill on the slopes of which the city stands, and it was agreed that on a certain day of each week they would signal from the housetop by means of a looking-glass, so that it could be seen from a hill well outside of the city limits. An alphabet was agreed upon between the brother and the sisters.

On the housetop the sisters constructed a booth which protected them from public view on three sides, being open on the side next to the hill which had been selected.

There every Monday just at noon one of them went, and for a half hour used a mirror so as to send a spot of sunshine to the hilltop. Sometimes there was a response came, and sometimes there was none, but the patriotic sisters never grew weary but were inexpressibly happy to do something toward the freeing of Cuba.

In this way they several times told their brother of days when the Spanish would probably send out trains with valuable cargoes; thus Martinez and his men had been able to do much effective work.

One day this is what Gualterio made out, "Blanco here and to go on special train to Jovellanos to-morrow. Saba?"

He was so excited that he could hardly reply in the affirmative. Then he hurried away, not waiting for night as he usually had done. Finding Martinez, they went that night with their men to a lonely spot on the railroad, and removing a rail so as to throw the train from the track, they secreted themselves near the track to await the coming train.

It was nearly noon of the following day ere they heard the rumbling of an approaching train. As it neared their hiding-place they found it hard to control themselves, so great was their excitement. It was coming

very slowly, showing that greater caution than usual was being observed.

When it was in sight it was easy for the hidden ones to see that there was something like a whole regiment of Spanish soldiers on the open cars. This, ordinarily, would have seemed to make the situation hopeless for even so brave a band, but these were nothing daunted, but waited only with the greater eagerness. The question uppermost in their minds was, "Is the captain-general on the train?"

Just as the train was hurled from the track, the band fired their well-aimed guns, then throwing them aside, they sprang forward with the fearful cry, "El machete!" Martinez confronted the colonel of the regiment just as the latter rose from the brush into which he had been thrown, and ordered him to surrender.

Just as the colonel was about to obey, he glanced around and asked, "Where are your men, captain?"

"We are a host within ourselves," came the quick reply.

Instantly, instead of handing his revolver to Martinez as he had started to do, he fired it full in his face. Martinez staggered and fell. In a moment a stroke from the machete of Gualterio almost severed the head of the colonel from his body.

The confusion was so great that it was hard for any one to see how many were in the attacking party, and when the Spanish soldiers saw that their leader and many of their comrades were slain, they fled in the direction of Matanzas. Gualterio immediately led the brave little band to the one passenger-coach that was attached to the train, to find it empty. The moment they realized the situation the railway officials occupying it had fled toward Matanzas, giving the signal to the train following the one thrown from the track. The other train did not await the flying soldiers, but hurriedly ran backward.

It was learned afterward that the second train had Blanco aboard. The other had been sent ahead as a precaution against surprise. This was a sore disappointment to the attacking party.

When Gualterio found the coach empty, he ran back to where Martinez was to find him senseless, lying where he had fallen. "Oh, he is dead!" exclaimed Gualterio, as he placed his hand upon the head of his fallen captain. Then that brave band forgot all danger in their distress for their loved captain, the lieutenant allowing the tears from his own eyes to fall upon the livid face as he bent down to imprint a loving kiss upon the cold cheek.

As he wiped the blood away from the hole in the head whence it was oozing, he called to a soldier to pour the water from his canteen upon the wound. When the water ran down over the face there were signs of life, and a little later Martinez murmured, "Is that what a Spaniard gives me for sparing his life?" Then opening his eyes and seeing Gualterio bending over him, he gazed around as if waking from a frightful dream, to find it was only a dream.

It turned out that the wound Martinez had received was only a flesh wound, the ball merely grazing the skull, and in less than an hour he and his men were at their horses, mounting to hurry away to the hills, for they well knew that it was dangerous to linger there. They had found nothing of particular value on the train in way of stores, but had secured all they could conveniently carry of the guns thrown away by the frightened Spaniards.

That night they went to the place where General Gomez had his temporary headquarters and reported what had been done. When, during a private interview with the general, Martinez told him of the establishment of heliographic communications between the hilltop and Matanzas, the old general, patting him approvingly on the shoulder, laughingly remarked, "My good boy, I will

have to put you in charge of my signal corps, when poor Cuba is able to have such a luxury; but it will not do to employ beautiful señoritas, lest you who have stood so bravely against the Spaniard fall a victim to the charms of one of the weaker sex."

"Nay, nay, General Gomez," exclaimed Martinez, "you give credit to the wrong person. To my gallant lieutenant, Gualterio Calderin, and his sisters belongs all the credit for the improvised heliographic station."

"Now that is just like you," earnestly replied the general, "you are truly a generous soul, too generous for your own safety, as shown in your offering mercy to that wicked Spanish colonel, that he might shoot you down as a reward for your kindness."

Gomez immediately set what troops he had with him in motion, about equally dividing them, sending one division to watch the railway leading from Matanzas to Jovellanos, and the other to watch the one leading from Matanzas to Havana. In this way he had some hope of capturing Blanco, but the scheme failed, as Blanco was wise enough to return to Havana by sea.

General Gomez did not forget to have the wound of Martinez attended to, and by the general's own surgeon. He would not consent that Martinez should accompany either expedition, though he had to seriously threaten to use his military authority before the brave young captain would consent to remain idle.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was at this time that Martinez was given an opportunity to tell his commander how much he was distressed about his mother, sister, and other relatives, who were among the *reconcentrados* at Santo Domingo, and about the wounding and capture of his father. He did not know whether his father was living or not, but believed he was in some of the dungeons about Havana.

The general was much moved, but confessed that he did not know of any plan by which these precious lives could be saved. He tenderly referred to the death of his own son, who had fallen bravely fighting to save General Antonio Maceo. When the old hero wiped away the tears which came in spite of his effort to restrain them, he promised to do what he could to save those who had given him such a noble boy to help to fill the place made vacant by the loss of his own. Martinez could hardly resist his desire to embrace the noble old hero. He did not succeed in keeping back the tears as he again and again thanked the general for his kind assurances.

The weeks and months dragged on, and still Juan, growing weaker and weaker from long confinement in

that dirty dungeon, waited in suspense. He had learned at the risk of his life that Alonzo was willing to use any means that would result in his murder. After the second visit of that Spaniard, he had ventured very cautiously to taste of the food that person had brought. He was sure he could discover something peculiar in the taste of the food, and when that night he was taken with a violent pain in his stomach and a strange dizziness in his head, he knew there had been an effort to kill him by poison.

It was a long time before Alonzo called again, and it cost Juan great effort to restrain himself so as not to betray his utter loathing of the scoundrel who had dogged his footsteps all these years. For the sake of his loved ones and Cuba's sake, he quietly heard his hypocritical professions of sympathy. Alonzo still pretended to be making efforts to save Juan, and Juan knew that he was lying and that, on the contrary, he was doing all that he could to accomplish his death. It might be that Alonzo was having the trial delayed in order that he might get something from his victim to aid him in finding the others whom he wished to ruin.

Juan had decided that he could not stand the awful suspense longer; then it seemed sure death, and at no distant day, if he remained in that foul hole. So he

impatiently awaited another visit from Señor Menendez, and when he came, to that person's great astonishment, he hurried to tell him of his vile purpose, assuring him that he would never get from this prisoner any of the information he was seeking.

Alonzo pretended to be amazed, but soon found that his mask was torn from him, and that the one whom he had so long and deeply hated fully understood him. Then he hissed through the bars, "You will very soon taste something of the fruits of a revenge that will be sweet to me," and hurried away. Juan felt that the die had been cast, and that the question of life or death with him would soon be settled so far as the Spaniards were concerned.

Sure enough, it was not many days until he received a very formal official notice from the captain-general to prepare for his trial under the charge of conspiracy against the Spanish government. That if he wanted to summon any witnesses, for him to do so immediately. The messenger waited for him to send any information to the authorities that he might desire to send. He hastily wrote a short note to the captain-general, saying that he was a regular soldier, having a commission as captain in the insurgent army, and therefore demanded the right of being tried as a soldier.

This demand was of no avail, and a few days later he was subjected to what was called a trial, which had few of the forms of trial about it. It was a piece of mockery in perfect keeping with the black record which had been made long ago in that old fort. As it had been in the cases of many of those who had previously been his fellow prisoners, he was moved from Morro to Cabañas Castle when the day of his trial came; and when the miserable form of trial was over with, he was placed in a dark cell to himself and allowed to communicate with no one.

He made no efforts to meet the charges preferred. Even if it had been in his power to do so, he knew it was perfectly useless. He was sentenced to die, with the alternative that, if he would confess his guilt and expose any others who may have been in the conspiracy with him, and would beg the clemency of the captain-general, his sentence would be made life imprisonment in the Ceuta prison on the North African coast.

The sentence was no surprise to him, and he quickly made up his mind to die, for he had rather die a hundred times over than be guilty of the vile conduct which the alternative would require. This even if the acceptance of such an alternative would secure his freedom, but deportation to a Spanish prison in Africa meant

more than immediate death. He was allowed three days in which to make known his choice.

While these things were happening in the prisons at Havana, things were rapidly nearing a crisis—an awful and final crisis—with those at Santo Domingo. There was a ray of joy in that miserable hut when Beatriz and Juanita came with some food. Señora Olivera, who had been calling so piteously for food, eagerly devoured all that Alicia dared to allow her, and was so revived that she began asking the questions she had asked many times before, “Where are Juan and Martinez? Have you no news from them? Why must I be mocked thus? If I could see them and hold them in my arms once more, then I could die happy.”

The condition of Señor and Señora Martinez was almost as distressing as that of Señora Olivera. They, too, had been piteously calling for food, and when Alicia gave them some of that which had been brought, they ate it with an eagerness that was pitiful to behold. Beatriz begged Alicia to eat some of the food, and when she hesitated, told her that it was her duty to do so for the sake of the others whom she was serving. She finally consented to do so, provided Beatriz and Juanita would join her. When they hesitated she used the same argument with them that Beatriz had used.

The picture of those three pure, refined women sitting there slowly and sadly eating the little pittance that was left, and feeling that it was the last, was pathetic in the extreme.

Though the elder Olivera had been dead for three days, his body still lay there in the little hut. Alicia had sent word to the town authorities, and then to the military headquarters, but still no one came to look after the burial. Decomposition had now set in, and the smell was fearful. Even if they had desired to do a thing so revolting to their sensibilities, none of them, nor all together, had the strength to move the body to the outside of the hut. The women had already learned that they could not look to the priests for any comfort and help, because they had before sought such help for others who had previously died.

Alicia had noticed that Juanita, when she came in from the market, was trembling, and now that she remained so forlorn, her mother began to suspect that something unusual had happened to her, and began to ask her what had occurred. Juanita, helped by Beatriz, told of how trying it was to go out begging for food—going as common beggars—and how hard it was to bear the rebuffs sometimes given. This was received by the mother, but it was not fully satisfactory.

Another day dawned and the cry of Señor and Señora Martinez for food again drove the almost maddened señoritas forth. This time they went to the headquarters of the commander of the post. After much delay, he gave them audience and quietly heard their tale of woe. Then he plied them with questions, among other things, asking them where their men relatives were. This gave Juanita opportunity to tell him that one of them was dead in their hut—had now been dead four days. Another was dying. As to the other men relatives, they knew not that any of them were living.

When in answer to one of his questions, Juanita told her name, he quickly became much interested, and said, 'Oh, if I could have known it earlier. There was a Spanish gentleman of means and influence who was here only yesterday, inquiring for two ladies of that name. He seemed exceedingly anxious to find them, and I am sure he is able to take good care of them; but I told him that there were none of that name, so far as I knew, and he went away toward Havana.'

The officer was too busy with his recitation to notice how Juanita was clutching the arm of Beatriz, and went on, "The gentleman left his address, and asked me, if I learned anything of the whereabouts of those for whom

he was searching, to communicate with him at Havana. Here is his address."

Beatriz glanced at the paper extended, and quickly said, "There is some mistake, for I know that gentleman, and am sure he is no *friend* of this young lady and her mother, besides, if those in whose behalf we come to you—we come not for ourselves, though we are starving—do not receive succor sooner than it can come from Havana they will perish. Please, señor, can you not help us in some way? Give us food or money," and she and Juanita looked up at him pleadingly.

The monster leered into their faces, and made a base proposition that made them fly from him as if he had been a spirit from hell. But they did not go until they had denounced him as a vile wretch. So fierce were the looks they gave him that he cowardly drew back. They seemed to be endued with superhuman strength, and when they fled, it was like two frightened hinds.

The officer, humiliated and angered by his defeat, hurried to the station to write A. Menendez of his discovery, for he felt sure these beggars did not want to see that personage, and that he had some design in seeking them beyond merely helping them. Indeed, he now remembered that Señor Menendez had cautioned him not to tell any one that he was seeking these persons. Then,

too, he remembered the peculiar emphasis which Beatriz had unconsciously given "friend." He fairly chuckled with fiendish delight as he thought of how he was going to humiliate "those beggars."

CHAPTER XXVI.

Beatriz could not prevail upon Juanita to go to the railway-station to beg as they had done the day previous. The poor girl was almost crazed at the very suggestion. They tried in the market, but with but little success. They had long before sold the jewelry they possessed for what little it would bring, except that Beatriz had kept back a little plain gold ring which her mother had given her. She now offered it to a trader for a little food. When he saw that it cost her a great struggle to part with it, he refused to take it but gave her all the food that he could spare. It was only a small bit, but it was gratefully received.

That night there was a gentle knock on the rude door of the hut. When Beatriz asked what was wanted, there came these strange and glad words, "Aunt Beatriz, be *very* quiet and let me in." She knew it was a friend, and hastened to open the door. A beggarly looking object came in.

It was Gualterio Calderin dressed as a beggar. He was so horrified at the sight which met his gaze during the moment the door stood open, though he saw only by

the moonlight, and then so fearfully nauseated by the awful stench that greeted him he could not speak for a minute.

He ventured to strike a match and to light a piece of candle he had brought with him. This he did to let them see who he was. What even the dim light revealed so sickened him that a curse almost escaped his lips. Had he been permitted to look upon the scene before coming in, he would have been sure he had come to the wrong place.

The moment he extinguished the candle, he was horrified still more by having Beatriz seize the candle and beg him not to burn up such precious food. Señora Martinez heard the words and began begging for a bit of the candle for herself and husband. Alas, poor soul! She did not need any of it for Señor Martinez. He was dead!

While Alicia, Beatriz, and Juanita sat dumb, made speechless by finding that death had stolen in on them unawares and claimed another victim, Señora Olivera unconsciously murmured, "Where are my dear Juan and Martinez? Will they never come?" This reminded Gualterio to tell what he knew of Juan, Martinez, and Gonzalez.

A wail that would have moved a heart of stone broke

forth from Alicia and Juanita when they heard that Juan had been wounded and captured more than a year before. The cry made Gualterio feel like it would be a sweet privilege to lay down his life to rescue Juan from prison and death, and to supply food to these starving ones.

He gave the suffering ones all the Spanish money that he, Gonzalez, and Martinez had been able to get up. It was to deliver this and to learn the condition of these loved ones that he had undertaken the perilous trip into the town; and now he must go ere daylight should come.

When he said that he must go, there was a fierce struggle in the mind of Beatriz. It lasted only a moment, and then she told Alicia of what they had learned of the search of A. Menendez. Alicia, trembling from head to foot, exclaimed, "I knew something unusual had happened, but I do not blame you, but love you and Juanita the more because you tried to spare me the awful news."

"I felt," interrupted Beatriz, "that Gualterio should know this ere he goes, so that he, brother, and Martinez might do what they could to prevent the coming of Menendez, for I feel sure the commander of the post has informed him of our whereabouts."

Like an inspiration, a thought came to Gualterio's mind, and he eagerly and hurriedly made it known. It

was that the women agree to go with Alonzo if he would agree to take all of them. Alicia and Juanita almost shrieked in terror at such a suggestion, but he insisted this was the only hope of escape from the awful death that surely awaited them there. They contended that death was far more preferable to falling into the power of that vile wretch. But when he gave his whole plan it inspired a hope, and all consented to do what they could to carry out the plan.

When Gualterio bade them good-by, it took more resolution to control his feelings than it would have taken to meet a dozen Spaniards on the field. He had only the slightest hope of ever seeing them in this life again. Even if he should safely make his escape from the city, and that would be almost a miracle, how like madness the plan for their rescue which had caused the little hope!

At this moment there was a savage rap on the door of the cabin, and a soldier police called out, "Let us have no talking in there." They instantly obeyed, and were happy when they heard him pass on. This incident delayed Gualterio's starting and made more dangerous his going. But he must go at all hazards, and he went, followed by as earnest prayers as ever went up from human lips. Even Alicia, devout Catholic that

she was, felt she was justifiable in going direct to the Savior in this case which involved so much.

When, in less than a half hour, they heard several gun-shots in the direction in which Gualterio had gone, their hearts sank within them, but still they continued in earnest prayer until daylight. Then Beatriz and Juanita went to the market to buy something to eat. They dared to show only a little of the money they possessed, lest suspicions be aroused.

Very soon after their return, the "funeral" cart appeared, and the bodies of the dead men were thrown into it with no more ceremony than if they had been the carcasses of wild beasts. The poor, heartbroken women wrung their hands in sorrow, but their fountain of tears was broken up when they thought of what had brought them to such an hour.

In the market Beatriz had asked what was the occasion of the firing just before day out on the trocha. The man addressed looked at her in surprise. He was surprised that such a question should be asked, when it was almost an every-day and every-night occurrence that some *reconcentrado*, maddened by hunger, was shot down in attempting to escape across the trocha. He told them that he did not know the occasion of the gun-shots, but

supposed it was the guards shooting some one who was trying to make his escape.

Alonzo Menendez had just settled down in a comfortable seat in his elegant home, feeling immense gratification that the condemnation of Juan Olivera had at last been accomplished when a letter was handed him by a servant who had just received it at the hands of a postman. He hastily tore it open and read, "Your women found. They are here in a starving condition." It was signed by the post-commander in Santo Domingo.

The look of satisfaction which plainly showed on Alonzo's face was observed by his wife who sat opposite him. When he arose to leave the room, which he did immediately, he put the envelope in his pocket, but let the letter drop on the floor. The moment he was out of the room, his wife seized and read the letter, then threw it back where it had fallen, and tried to go on with the reading in which she had been engaged. Later, when Alonzo returned to the room, he nervously picked up the paper, glancing inquiringly in the direction of his wife, but as she seemed deeply interested in her book he passed on.

Later he came in, and casually remarked that he would have to leave on the early morning train on some business. She did not venture to ask for any particu-

lars, for she had learned, to her sorrow, that he would be angered by such questions. She did venture to warn him of the danger of traveling on the railway trains, reminding him of what had occurred a few days previous. He tried to laugh at her fears.

Gualterio had safely leaped the trocha by the aid of a pole he had picked up, and was just extricating himself from the barbed-wire fence on the outside of the ditch when a sentry discovered him and fired on him. He was unhurt, and quickly crawled away through the thorn-brush which was abundant there and made his escape, though leaving much of his beggar suit hanging on the thorns.

He reached the impatient Gonzalez and Martinez a little after sunup. They were greatly moved by what he told them, and earnestly arranged to carry out the plan suggested by Gualterio, though they trembled at the idea of their dear ones being in charge of that villainous Spaniard for even an hour.

Both companies and their leaders left their hiding-place immediately after dark that evening, and going westward, they came into the neighborhood of the railroad at a safe distance from Santo Domingo, and not too close to Macagua, the next military post of the Spaniards. They guessed that A. Menendez would come on the train

of the following afternoon, and the two captains, leaving their lieutenants in command, secured positions on each side of the track, hiding themselves as near the railroad as they dared. There, armed with their field-glasses, they awaited the coming train, hoping to be able to get a glimpse of Alonzo if he should be aboard.

It was early in the morning when they secured their hiding-places, and it seemed a long waiting until the time of the afternoon train. It came, and the eager watchers were on the alert. They both saw that the train had a double guard of soldiers, and yet that it had no box-cars nor extra express-cars in which it was usual to carry important government freight, and consequently there must be some important personages in the first-class coach. Moreover, Gonzalez felt sure that he got a glimpse of Menendez.

Now, as the train for the west had already gone for that day, meeting this one at Macagua, it would be impossible for Alonzo to return with his captives toward Havana until just after noon of the following day. If they succeeded in derailing the train going west the following day, it would be in the way of the eastbound train, thus making it impossible for Alonzo to leave Santo Domingo toward Cienfuegos should he fail to be on the westbound train.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The would-be rescuers realized that their undertaking was a desperately hazardous one, for the well-armed train-guard would be superior in numbers to their companies combined, while they would have to be very careful in shooting lest they might kill the very persons whose rescue they sought. Fortunately, Gualterio had instructed the women to drop on the floor of the car as soon as the attack should begin.

Before daylight the Cubans were securely hidden in a sugar-cane field where the cane had fortunately been left standing. It was not until that same morning that Alonzo found his proposed victims. On the forenoon of the previous day, Señora Olivera had passed away, and, in the afternoon at about the hour the train arrived bearing its villainous burden, Señora Martinez was happily and peacefully released from her suffering.

Their good fortune was almost envied by those of the party who survived them, when on the next morning their bodies were hauled away in that awful "funeral" cart.

Beatriz bravely offered to call upon the commander of

the post and beg his aid, as she and Juanita had done. Thus he would be able to direct Alonzo how to find their stopping-place. To her surprise she found Alonzo with the commander, and that person proceeded to present her to "Señor A. Menendez, one of the most prominent and worthy citizens of Havana." Beatriz merely bowed to Alonzo, and turned to the commander and began begging him in behalf of the starving ones.

Alonzo quickly interrupted her, and offered her all the assistance needed if she would only show him where her friends were and assist him in prevailing upon them to accompany him to Havana. This she offered to do, but added, as they walked on toward the cabin, that she felt sure they would never consent to leave her there. He assured her that she should go along with the party and all be made comfortable, if she would succeed in prevailing on them to go with him.

Alicia and Juanita had arranged the miserable hut as best their strength would allow, and they had all gained strength, for they had been taking all the food they dared since the night Gualterio was there. This last they had done in order that they might have all the strength possible for the ordeal through which they expected to pass. Besides, all had dressed the best possible under the circumstances, but that was not elegant.

When they neared the hut, Beatriz suggested that it would be better for him to linger and allow her to enter the hut, and inform them of his presence and proposition, and try to prevail on them to go with him. He gladly consented to this, for he trembled at the thought of meeting those whom he so ignominiously sought to wrong.

When he was called in, it was very evident that he was greatly shocked to see Alicia and Juanita so wasted and their surroundings so miserable. It is but just to say there was something of real sincerity in his expressions of sympathy, and also in his expressions of alarm, for all along the way to the hut he had seen many signs of disease and death.

None will doubt that he had occasion to be alarmed when it is remembered that of about seven thousand *re-concentrados* crowded together there, now less than one hundred remained, the others having perished with hunger and disease, except those who had been killed by the soldiers while trying to escape.

It was soon arranged that the three women would accompany him, and that they would be ready to go on the train which was to leave that day for Havana. With Alicia and Juanita to thus agree to go under the protection of one whom they could but regard as a vile mon-

ster was one of the greatest trials of their lives, and it was only because by this that they hoped to secure their freedom from this place of disease and starvation that they consented to the plan.

When Alicia and the others noticed what a strong guard of soldiers attended the train, they were greatly alarmed. *How* earnestly they prayed as the train neared the spot where they supposed the attack was going to be made, and how their hearts beat in expectation! Theirs were not the only hearts which were wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement.

The rescuing band had torn loose one iron rail of the railway-track, but left it in place until near the time for the train. Then they had posted two men far enough toward Santo Domingo to ensure against the train running back into that place when danger was discovered. These men were armed with obstructions which they were to immediately place upon the track when the train had passed.

Gonzales and Martinez (and there was another whose feelings were in harmony with theirs) could not bear the thought of throwing a train from the track, and thus crush to death those for whose rescue it was done, so they had resolved upon a plan which, while it was more perilous to themselves, might do away with the necessity

of derailing the train. A man dressed in rags had been detailed to appear on the track at the proper moment, to give a danger signal. The very one to best accomplish this was Antonio Hernandez, the Frenchman *re-concentrado* who had escaped to them, for he was an old railroader. As another means to ensure success, men had been specially detailed with instructions that, at the moment the attack began, they were to kill the engineer and fireman.

When the train came within about a quarter of a mile of where the band was secreted, for some unknown cause it slowed up and came to a standstill. It was difficult for Gonzalez and Martinez to control their men, and equally difficult to control themselves. They felt that Antonio had proved a traitor and had given the signal too early.

This was a time of suspense that was indescribably awful with the watchers. Every moment they expected to see the train start on the return to Santo Domingo, and so did the trembling ones in the train. These last felt that they would die if the plot was discovered and they were not rescued. To the great joy of many anxious hearts the train again started forward, and was under fair speed when the signal of Antonio brought it to almost a standstill.

Then the sugar-cane beside the road became alive with men who, when they had fired with deadly aim, sprang forward with the dreaded cry, "El machete!" The engineer was killed by the first fire, but not until he had reversed the steam. Immediately the train began to move toward Santo Domingo, but Antonio was equal to the emergency. Leaping upon the engine, he again brought the cars to a stand.

The battle was the most desperate these Cubans had ever engaged in, but they felt that more was at stake. No quarter was asked and none was given. To the Spaniards it was death or flight. Many of them heroically met the first, while a goodly number chose the latter.

When the women, according to instructions, lay down on the floor of the car, the frightened, cowardly Alonzo imitated their example, and fortunately was not killed in the fight. When nearly all of the regular guard were either killed or had fled, Gonzalez, Martinez, and Gualterio rushed to the first-class coach, but not before the three Spanish officers in it had locked the doors and begun firing at the rescuers.

Gonzalez was the first who reached the front door, and he threw himself against it with all his might, but only to receive a ball from the revolver of a Spanish

officer. Beatriz saw her brother fall, and forgetting all danger, rushed madly against the officer who was just in the act of shooting Martinez, who had taken the place of Gonzalez.

Gualterio had hurried to the rear door of the car. The officer defending it had turned his attention to the terrible struggle at the front door. Quick as thought, Juanita sprang to the rear door and unbolted it. Gualterio leaped in, and by one blow with his machete struck down the nearest Spaniard and rushed upon the second, who threw up his hands and begged for mercy. Martinez had burst the door open and rushed upon the other Spaniard, shivering that officer's sword with his machete, causing him to fall back over a seat. He, too, surrendered.

Alonzo was found crouching between two seats, and begged for mercy like a frightened puppy. Martinez was restrained from killing him as if he had been a wild beast—he was worse—by his mother pleading that he be spared. This surprised Martinez, but he learned later that Alonzo alive was of far more value than Alonzo dead.

Alonzo and the Spanish officers were securely tied, under the directions of Gualterio, by the Cubans who had rushed in. Martinez and the women had gone to

where Gonzalez had fallen insensible to the ground. The women were weeping bitterly that their rescue should have been secured at such a cost. But Gonzalez was not dead, or if he was, he proved himself a very lively corpse, for he soon sat up. It was found that he had received a severe but not dangerous wound in the left shoulder. The fall had knocked him insensible.

When Alonzo Menendez discovered the identity of Martinez, he could not have looked more puzzled if he had seen him rise up out of the grave, but no one had time or disposition to explain matters to him. More important things needed to be seen to, and that immediately. To-morrow, Juan Olivera was to die in the "death-chamber," at Cabañas unless there was some extraordinary intervention.

This terrible news had been imparted to Alicia by Alonzo, who had promised to intercede to save Juan, and he had said there was good hope that he could at least save him from death, but his pretensions inspired not the least hope in her breast. She hurriedly explained the situation to Martinez, who instantly fell upon a plan.

The loosened rail was replaced, and the train with the women, Gonzalez, Martinez, Gualterio, and a sufficient guard from the companies aboard, moved on toward the

small town Mardazo, which was not garrisoned and was only a few miles distant. Antonio Hernandez was the engineer.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When the station was reached the astonished telegraph-operator was ordered to serve the visitors, and to do so in a hurry. First he was told to telegraph back to Santo Domingo and forward to Macagua that the train had arrived. A moment after the machine began its clickety-click, Gualterio excitedly seized the arm of the operator and with drawn machete cried out, "Stop, or you'll be a dead man in a second."

Martinez was astonished, and exclaimed, "Lieutenant, have you gone mad?"

"No, my worthy captain, but this scoundrel is sending a message saying the train has been captured," replied Gualterio, who was an old hand at the telegraphy business, as he soon proved to the frightened and astonished operator, who was begging for mercy.

By the time messages were sent to these two places, Martinez had a very carefully prepared telegram ready for transmission to Captain-General Blanco. It was to the effect that Señor Alonzo Menendez and two Spanish officers (one a captain and two lieutenants) had been captured, and would be put to death if the sentence of

death to be executed at noon of the next day upon one Señor Juan Olivera, in Cabañas, was not stayed. For further information, the captain-general was to send a courier under a flag of truce to General Gomez.

When Martinez read the message aloud, Alonzo turned deathly pale. He was ordered to prepare a message to his father, asking him to intercede with Blanco in his behalf. He obeyed with as much alacrity as his frightened condition would allow.

After all the messages were sent, the train was run back to the place of rescue, and on the suggestion of Antonio, was saturated with oil, set on fire, and the steam turned on. Soon it was under good speed which duly fed the flames, and a burning mass it shot through the station just visited and on toward Macagua. A mighty cheer went up from the Cubans when Antonio leaped from the engine after having turned on the steam.

But there was no extra time for cheering. These bands must hasten away from the dangers which now threatened from both sides. The soldiers were allowed time to bury their noble fellow soldiers who had fallen in the desperate fight. This they did in the neighboring sugar-cane field. Alicia, Beatriz, and Juanita could but weep over these graves, for they felt these men had died to save them from what was worse than death.

The women were too weak to ride on the horses which had been brought for them, and some of the huge baskets or bags used for carrying provisions on the horses of the pack-train had to be used for them in their starved condition. This reminded Martinez and Juanita of their rides from Trinidad when they were children. They sighed when they remembered that their troubles, which had been many and great, began while on such a ride.

While waiting for the telegrams to be sent, the wound of Gonzalez had been dressed by the loving hands of those for whom it had been received, and now he was able to ride his horse and protested that he was not very uncomfortable. He was too happy to be conscious of much pain. The joy of the rescued ones when they breathed in the pure, free air of the fields, and had time to realize that they were indeed free, knew no bounds.

The prisoners were very carefully looked after. They were regarded a very valuable possession. Among them was the wily telegraph-operator who had been brought along lest he should do some mischief. The dilapidated condition of his machine after Gualterio had vigorously used a hammer on it did not indicate that he could do much harm with it.

The companies traveled far into the night before stop-

ping to camp, but when they did stop they felt sure they were beyond present danger. Though the food was of the coarsest kind, the women pronounced it the most palatable of any they had ever tasted. It was not enjoyed by Señor Menendez, and he seemed even more fatigued than were the women.

A courier had been sent forward to General Gomez, informing him of the capture and suggesting that it might be well to offer Señor A. Menendez in exchange for Juan Olivera. As the latter was treated as a citizen prisoner, the captain-general could make such an exchange even if the Spanish had refused to exchange military prisoners.

Gomez was pleased with the suggestion, remarking that Captain M. Olivera would make a wise diplomat. The companies came by easy marches to the camp of Gomez, and reached it safely after several days. It was in the rich sugar-cane district, in the neighborhood of Navajas, Matanzas Province.

By the time the camp was reached a great transformation had taken place in those noble women who had suffered so much. When they were presented to General Gomez by Gonzalez and Martinez, he greeted them warmly, and tenderly stooping down, gallantly imprinted a kiss on each of the yet wan cheeks of Juanita.

This he did as if she had been his own little child. When the brave captains had retired, he told the women that if he had a few thousand like those two men, Cuba would soon be free.

Gonzalez and Martinez were greatly disappointed to find that no communication had yet arrived from the captain-general. Alicia was greatly distressed. She trembled with the fear of a new sorrow, and one greater than all the others, being added to the many which had gone before. Alonzo was also greatly disturbed, indeed was terrified, for Gomez had very promptly ratified the conditions proposed to Blanco by Martinez; and A. Menendez must die if Juan Olivera was executed.

The elder Menendez and his wife were almost crazed when they found their son was in the hands of those "banditti," as they were accustomed to call the Cubans. What should they do? Blanco was out of the city, and would not return until after the day appointed for the execution of the sentence pronounced upon Juan.

Señor Menendez hurried to the military governor of the city, but that official claimed that he had no power to stay the sentence. Indeed, he pretended to know but little about the matter. Before Menendez left, the governor hinted that something *might* be done, but it would cost much money.

Not knowing what else to do, Señor Menendez went to the wife of Alonzo, hoping she might give him some light. He found her so excited that he soon despaired of getting any assistance from her, and was about to leave, when she handed him a letter which she thought might be of some help to him. She had accidentally found it where it had been dropped by Alonzo.

Señor Menendez found it was from the city governor and concerning one Juan Olivera, a prisoner as a "suspect," confined in Morro Castle, and he examined it with great interest. He was astounded to find that it was a promise to A. Menendez to bring about the death of said Olivera, on the receipt of five thousand dollars. Controlling his emotions the best he could, he quietly said that the letter might be of some service and he would take it along with him.

The morning appointed for the execution dawned, and yet nothing had been done to save the prisoner who, the afternoon before, had sent in his final and positive refusal to accept the alternative on the conditions proposed. Juan felt it was to be his last day on earth, and prepared himself for the ordeal. He felt that he would like to have the use of a priest in this last hour. This in spite of the fact that for several years he had been made to utterly abhor those calling themselves priests.

He was duly notified at ten o'clock that he had only two hours to live and must be ready to come from the cell in half that time.

He had suffered so long and so much, that for his own sake he cared not that his last day had arrived, but he did feel that it was hard that he should die by base, false accusation, and that he should be taken from those who needed him so much. Then he wondered what had become of his wife, son and daughter, with the other loved ones. May be they had long ago preceded him. There was bitterness in his soul. He tried to pray, but he felt that his petitions did not rise higher than the low ceiling of his cell. He felt that he was indeed desolate—deserted by God and man.

In the midst of these meditations he was astonished to hear that he would be allowed to speak a few minutes with a visitor. He was more astonished when he found the visitor was the elder Menendez. The latter, without explanations as to why he came, said that Juan would yet be allowed to choose life imprisonment instead of death. Juan quietly but firmly said that he had made his choice, and that it was final. The other was greatly distressed, and earnestly begged Juan to reconsider his decision. His distress was a mystery to the prisoner.

"May I ask," said Juan, "why you have become so in-

terested in my behalf, when your son, more than all others, is responsible for my condemnation?"

"That I am under oath not to reveal," answered the other; "but if you will only do as I beg, you shall know all."

"For no one, and for no cause, however sacred, can I consent to become the base, lying accuser of the innocent, nor will I confess myself guilty of that for which I am condemned, when I know and God knows I am innocent. I repeat, my decision is final." These words were spoken gently, but resolutely. The time allowed for the interview had expired, and Señor Menendez was forced to retire.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Señor Menendez hurried to the palace of the city governor determined on one more effort, and was not going to mince matters. Though he found that official very busy with some other callers, Menendez rushed in without ceremony and asked for a private interview immediately. When the governor hesitated, Menendez stooped and whispered something in his ear. Turning pale, he arose and walked into his private office, beckoning his visitor to follow him. Their conference was not long, and when Señor Menendez hastily left that palace, it was with a look that showed he had triumphed.

There was no time to lose. A respite for three days had been secured, and it must be immediately put into the hands of those who had charge of the executions at Cabañas, or it would be too late. Menendez trusted no one else with its delivery, but carried it himself. He was barely in time to prevent the execution. The executioners looked disappointed when the respite was handed to them.

Menendez waited until he saw Juan back in the cell, then, bidding him to be cheerful, went away. When he

landed at the wharf on the city side there was a messenger awaiting him to say that the city governor desired to see him immediately. He went to that official's palace, where he was cordially received, and before he left it was arranged that the matter of exchange should be submitted to Captain-General Blanco who would doubtless agree to it.

The suspense among the anxious ones at the camp of Gomez became almost unbearable, as day after day passed with no news from the capital. General Gomez began preparations to change camp, for he had already been in that place longer than he had before dared to stay at any one point. Alicia's heart sank within her.

At Cabañas, another day came and went, and there was no change. The night had come, and Juan had fallen into a troubled sleep, when he was suddenly aroused by feeling the stone beneath him tremble violently, then came a terrific sound. He wondered what had happened. He knew it to be something of great importance, for he could hear the confusion caused in the fort. The shock had been something like that of an earthquake.

The next morning a guard came for him and, to his great surprise, he was taken from the prison and conducted to the wharf, placed in a boat, and accompanied by the guard was rowed across to the city. He saw the

ruins of a battleship, and heard the boatman say to the guard that it was the "Maine," a ship belonging to the United States. He guessed at what had happened the night before, and wondered if it had anything to do with his being removed from Cabañas.

He was conducted to the railway-station in the city and placed in a coach, the guard still remaining with him. This mystified him more than ever, but the soldiers of the guard would not answer his questions as to what it meant. Before the train started, Señor Menendez came, and spoke kindly to Juan, and told him what had happened, and that they were going out to La Union, Matanzas Province, where a large force of Spaniards were encamped, and where the exchange was to be made.

While crossing the bay, Juan had felt that the sun shined brighter than he had ever seen it before, that the waves looked more beautiful and the sky prettier. Indeed, as he breathed in the fresh, invigorating atmosphere his whole system was exhilarated, and he was happy in spite of doubts and fears. Now that he understood what had happened and was to happen, though dazed by the good news, his joy seemed complete. And yet it was not complete. "Where are Alicia, Juanita, and my brave boy?" and other questions of the kind came into his mind and a cloud darkened his face made deathly pale by his long confinement.

La Union was reached, the exchange was made, and almost before he knew it and before he could realize it, he was in the arms of his brave and honored boy, who had begged the privilege of coming under a flag of truce to conduct the exchange. The meeting of the other father and son, the wealthy Menendezes, was not like that of Juan and Martinez. Juan was so overjoyed that he felt like he could forgive even the devil himself, and he cordially greeted Alonzo, who was himself too happy not to warmly return the greetings.

Another glad surprise awaited the freed prisoner. Martinez could hardly wait until they were on the way to Gomez's camp to tell of the rescue of his mother, sister, and Beatriz. Oh, the joy which shone in the face of that father and husband! But it was not yet gladness unalloyed. He could but think of how terrible must have been the suffering of his dear wife and daughter.

Rebuking himself that he had not thought of it sooner, he asked, "But where are your grandfathers and grandmothers?" That was a hard question for even a brave boy to answer, and his father saw it all, and hastened to say, "I understand, my brave boy, and I spare you the pain of telling me." He turned his head away, and rode on in silence. By and by, as if talking to himself, he slowly said, "Weyler, 'the butcher,' *reconcentrados*,

disease and starvation! Oh, may God save crushed, bleeding, starving Cuba!"

It is simply useless to undertake a description of the joyous scene witnessed at the insurgent camp when the father and son arrived, and not one entered more heartily into the joy of the happy family than did the old general. The hearts of all seemed full.

During the next few months things of great importance, not only to Cuba, happened in such quick succession that it seemed the electric age had come and the world was mounted on lightning. The blowing up of the Maine helped to bring things to a crisis between the United States and Spain, and, though that catastrophe occurred on February 15, 1898, war had been declared and begun in earnest before the end of the following April.

Alicia, Beatriz, and Juanita gained strength so rapidly that they were soon their former selves. They insisted that they must give themselves entirely to the cause of Cuba, and did hospital work among the Cuban soldiers, if that can be called hospital work which moves from place to place on short notice, and sometimes takes up its abode in a deserted country building, under a shed that has been used for cattle, or under the trees in some hidden valley.

General Gomez was so charmed with these brave little women that he was only too glad to encourage them in what they seemed so happy in doing. On a mountain in the Province of Puerto Principe, these workers spent some time in the most permanent hospital the insurgents had ever possessed. There they did noble service for the poor fellows who had been wounded or struck down by disease.

Gonzalez and Martinez, with their companies, were still active, the first in the sugar-cane districts and the other along the lines of railroads, where he did much to harass the Spanish. Juan was made captain of a company which had long been with Gomez and whose captain had been killed in a recent engagement.

The patriotic sisters of Gualterio still co-operated with Martinez and his men until the commander of the post at Matanzas, who had long been searching for the persons who he believed were communicating with the insurgents, finally discovered their whereabouts. But when he sent to arrest them, they had gone in such a mysterious manner that he half believed they were spirits.

They stayed on the housetop long enough to send this message to their alarmed brother: "We are discovered. Meet us at the 'little' cave at ten o'clock to-night." Then they went to the palmetto hut of a trusted friend,

on top of the hill on the slopes of which the city stands, and were hidden away until darkness came on. There they were met by a bosom friend, a Spanish señorita, whose brother was a sergeant in a Spanish company stationed in the old barracks near by. He was in charge of the picket line there that very night and that very night Lucia and Eleanor Calderin were safely conducted beyond the lines.

Do some cry out "conspirators!" "traitors!" against these? Those are very harsh terms. Too harsh to apply to Benito Ramon and his fair sister Isabelita. They loved the cause of Spain with an undying devotion, and the young sergeant was truer to his obligations as a soldier than was common among the Spanish soldiers.

Here is the whole secret: Benito loved Spain, but he loved Señorita Lucia Calderin more. Isabelita loved the cause of her mother-country, but she loved a certain brave Cuban lieutenant, Gualterio Calderin, far better. They did not mean to be untrue to the cause which they had so enthusiastically espoused. They had perhaps heard something like this, "All things are fair in love and war."

Oh, how much Isabelita wanted to accompany her friends "just to see the 'little' cave," but her brother said that would be daring too much. It was called the

"little" cave to distinguish it from the large one on the side of the valley. It was at this little cave, where they had in childhood played with Benito and Isabelita, that Gualterio and his sisters met at ten o'clock on this particular night.

They were soon hurrying across the Yumuri, one of the loveliest valleys in all Cuba, toward the place where Martinez and his men awaited Gualterio. As they hurried along they almost forgot the roughness of the way in telling each other of their many exciting adventures.

Before he knew it, Gualterio had several times spoken of the charming Juanita, when he was reminded of it by Lucia exclaiming, "Oh, you wicked, unfaithful lover! Here you are so in love with a little Cuban maiden that you can hardly speak of any one else, and have hardly deigned to ask about one whom you once claimed to love with all your heart, and one who has just saved your sisters from at least a dark, damp Spanish prison, and may be from death. Shame on you!"

"So say I," echoed Eleanor. And he did feel ashamed, and his heart again turned toward the fair Isabelita whom it had almost forgotten.

CHAPTER XXX.

Martinez was surprised as he had not been in a long time when Gualterio appeared accompanied by his two sisters. But Gualterio had done too much for his own dear little sister for Martinez not to give the señoritas a warm welcome for their brother's sake, even if they had not already rendered him so much valuable service in helping him harass the enemy they all hated.

When he learned who they were and why they had come, he not only cordially greeted them himself, but introduced them to his whole company, briefly stating what valuable service they had rendered the cause of freedom, and gallantly proposed "three cheers" in honor of the brave and patriotic señoritas—only they must not cheer loud enough to arouse the Spanish soldiers who were not many miles away. The members of the company vied with each other in honoring the sisters of their brave and beloved lieutenant. This pleased Gualterio, and he was grateful to his men.

When the señoritas were presented to General Gomez by Martinez as "recruits for his hospital corps," the general pleasantly demurred, saying, "Nay, nay, my good captain. These are the most honored part of Cu-

ba's signal corps." The sisters were delighted with their reception by the brave old general, who was as gallant toward them as if they had been princesses, and they *were* princesses.

Señoritas Lucia and Eleanor were willing to do hospital work, not merely because they had nothing else to do and nowhere else to go, but for the reason they loved the cause of Cuba and were willing to work and suffer for it. They and Alicia, Beatriz, and Juanita made very efficient nurses, but the hardships which they had to endure were very severe for delicate and refined womanhood. In the hospital on the mountain they were like so many angels of mercy among the suffering soldiers.

Gualterio was *almost* sorry that he could not be sick, wounded, or something that would land him in the hospital; and it must be confessed that Martinez, soldierly Martinez, was in danger in spite of the long-time-ago warning of the wise old general of being conquered by the charms of a very important part of the "signal corps." He felt almost as anxious to be sick, wounded, or "something" as did Gualterio. And Lucia, "dear, good Lucia, thou who didst upbraid thy brother for being forgetful of the sweetheart of his childhood days, beware! Art thou so soon forgetting the fair-complexioned Spanish lad who risked his honor, yea, his life, for thee?"

General Gomez was gathering his forces together and moving on toward the east end of the island in order to co-operate with the Americans, who were threatening the city of Santiago de Cuba. Gonzalez and Martinez were glad to be allowed to accompany him. Both, having pleasant memories of their residence in the United States, were elated with the idea of fighting along by the side of soldiers from that country. It seemed that they might have that privilege soon, as the United States was already landing soldiers at Guantanamo, and these would soon be pressing on toward the city of Santiago.

It was deemed wise to establish a hospital nearer the base of operations, so all of the very efficient corps previously mentioned went forward, though the march was a long and severe one, and the rainy season found it incomplete; but the noble women endured the terrible hardships without a murmur.

Very soon after their arrival in the vicinity of Santiago there was great need for nurses for the United States soldiers, and as Beatriz and Juanita could speak the English they were prevailed upon by some representatives of the Red Cross Society to take work under the auspices of that society and in the American hospital.

Through some of the soldiers who came under their care, Beatriz and Juanita were happy to hear of the earnest and successful efforts their friend, Dr. Farmer,

was making in raising funds for the relief of the *reconcentrados*.

Juanita also learned that her friend, Mr. Carlton, who had saved her from being crushed under a street-car, had joined the United States volunteers for service in the cause of Cuba.

Great success was attending the arms of the United States. In the Philippine Islands, Commodore Dewey had won the greatest naval victory of modern times. Now Cervera's fleet had been cooped up in the Santiago harbor, and the American and Cuban forces were closing around that city. Some severe engagements had already taken place in the neighborhood, and victory was on the side of the Americans.

All this caused great rejoicing in down-trodden Cuba. A little later, when the Spanish fleet, undertaking to escape from the harbor of Santiago, was completely annihilated, and the city and province of Santiago de Cuba were surrendered to the Americans, the war was virtually at an end.

These triumphs were not won without great sacrifice. Many of the United States and Cuban soldiers fell victims to either Spanish bullets or disease. The hospitals were full to overflowing even after the conflict had ceased. The surrender found Gonzalez, Martinez, and Gualterio all in the Cuban hospital.

Juan and Gonzalez, with their companies dismounted and fighting next to the United States troops, had distinguished themselves for bravery during the terrible charge up San Juan Hill, but escaped without a wound, though it seems a miracle that any should have escaped unhurt, when it is remembered that the Spanish were behind breastworks, and had nothing to do but to pour a galling fire into the advancing columns.

That the reader may have some idea of how deadly was the aim of the advancing lines, I will say that I myself, in going over the field *afterwards*, counted as many as a dozen bullet-marks on one little tree which stood near the Spanish ditches, and other trees in that neighborhood were in very much the same plight. Had the Spanish soldiers been in the open field, it does not seem possible that any of them would have been left standing.

Martinez and his company, still mounted, had been placed on the extreme right of the Cuban army, in order to protect that flank. In the beginning of the fight they had but little to do, except to watch and wait, but when the Spanish lines began to give way, Martinez and his company, being no longer needed for the special purpose for which they had been detailed, were ordered to dismount and charge upon the retiring columns. This they did only too eagerly, for they had grown impatient in waiting. As they were fresh they were soon in the

lead of the advancing lines. Being near the Spanish, and being anxious for one more machete charge, they rushed forward, and were soon in a hand-to-hand struggle with far superior numbers.

Martinez fell at the head of his company. Gualterio immediately took command, but a few moments later he too was shot down. The company had reached a point near the second line of the Spanish fortifications, and was forced to fall back under a galling fire. Two of the company, determined not to leave their leaders on the field, did not retire with the others, but secreted themselves to await an opportunity to carry their captain and lieutenant off the field.

That night, when it was learned at the hospital that both Martinez and Gualterio had been left on the field, there was great sorrow. It was dark, but Lucia and Eleanor begged that they might be allowed to go in search of the lost ones. They were told that it would never do, but still they pleaded. Finally permission was granted, and armed with a lantern and several canteens of water, they started. Alicia, almost crazed with grief, begged to be allowed to go also, but the surgeon plainly said her duty was there in the hospital and that if she would remain he could go.

When the little company reached the foot of the hill up which the eager men had charged, Sergeant Luis

met them and said, "You are just in time." A moment later when the surgeon bent over Martinez, he knew what the sergeant had said was true, for he found that Martinez's leg had been shattered, and he was bleeding profusely, though the faithful Luis and his companion had sought to bind up the limb so as to stop the flow of blood.

Gualterio, with a bullet-hole through his shoulder, was not in such a critical condition as was his captain, but needed immediate surgical attention. Sergeant Luis and Corporal Diego, who had bravely remained with their leaders, lay hidden among the fallen soldiers until darkness came, and then carried Martinez and Gualterio one at a time to the foot of the hill where the women and the surgeon found them.

The water brought by the sisters was gratefully received by all the famishing soldiers. These good angels assisted the surgeon in dressing the wounds while Diego went to secure men and stretchers to carry the wounded to the hospital. In a little while they were safely in the hospital and were being made as comfortable as loving hands and hearts, with the scant means provided, could make them.

Martinez was pronounced to be in a most critical condition. Much of the time his mind wandered in delirium, but even in the delirium he begged his mother and

Lucia not to allow the surgeons to amputate his leg. He had heard a surgeon say that such would probably be necessary.

The next morning while on dress-parade, the gallant Luis and Diego were read out as having distinguished themselves for great bravery, and each was presented with a silver-mounted saddle.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Beatriz and Juanita were anxious about the relatives and friends whom they knew were in the battle, but they were so busy and were in the midst of so much suffering they had no time to worry about things which might or might not be true.

In Juanita's ward there was a young Alabamian who was not expected to recover. He had been told that if there were any messages which he wanted written Juanita could serve him. He asked her to bring him some letters which she would find in his coat pocket, and to read the one from his mother. In searching for the letter desired she found one from a soldier-boy in camp in Tennessee. He, seeing it in her hand, asked whom it was from. She glanced at the signature, and was astonished to find it was from her friend, Mr. Carlton.

"Please be so kind, if I do not recover, as to answer that letter for me," requested the young man. "The writer is a college chum, and a very dear friend," he added. Juanita was ashamed that she hesitated to so promise to do as requested. It was a false notion which prevails in this country as well as in Cuba that caused her to hesitate. But she quickly recovered her better

judgment and promised, at the same time cheerfully remarking, "But you must get well and do your own writing."

"The letter from mother" was found, and she slowly and distinctly read it aloud. It was a tender, loving epistle, just such as a mother, a Christian mother, can write to her soldier-boy. Best of all, it was full of wise religious counsel. In the pathos of that reading Juanita felt moved toward God and the Christ as never before. In the prayer with which the letter closed there was no going by the way of the "Holy Mother," but a direct and trustful appeal to God.

Juanita reverently laid the letter down, while she could not hide the tears which flowed from her eyes. "That is the sweetest, best Christian mother in the world," said the soldier. "I was once a wicked boy, and tried to disbelieve the Bible, but my mother's life and prayers were too much for me. Thank God! They brought me to the Savior. Now, will you please get my little Bible—mother gave it to me—and read some to me?"

She obeyed, but the obeying caused a commotion in her mind. "What would mother say? What would the *padre* (father) say?" came into her mind, but she had no time then to debate these questions. But what should she read? She had hardly ever looked into a

Bible. Years before, when she was leaving for her stay in the United States, the *padre* had made her promise not to read the Bible of the "heretics."

The young soldier only increased her embarrassment by suggesting that she read the twenty-third Psalm. When she could not find it, he looked at her in amazement. He showed it to her, and as she read, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," etc., she thought it was the most beautiful thing she had ever read. The passage, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death," etc., was read, and he requested her to please read it again.

Then, that he might not embarrass her again, he showed her how to find the fourteenth chapter of John, and requested that she also read it to him. As she read its glorious truths, she wondered why she should have been doomed to live as long as she had, and a life, too, with so much of sorrow pressed into it, and yet not know that such truths had been spoken by the Savior.

While she was reading, the chaplain came along, and when he saw what she was doing, said, "That is right, daughter. That is the best medical book in the world. The Great Physician gave its prescriptions." Then sitting down, he asked her to continue the reading.

When the close of the chapter was reached, he, addressing the soldier, asked, "Shall I pray with you?"

"Yes, if you please, now that we have had mother's two favorite chapters."

The chaplain knelt, and *such* a prayer—so simple, so tender, so trustful—Juanita had never heard before. She had bowed her head, but ventured to look up, because she felt the Savior must be right there, for the chaplain seemed to be pleading with some one standing before him.

After the prayer was ended the chaplain remained some little time, talking to the soldier and promising to deliver messages to his loved ones in the United States, if the soldier did not live to deliver them for himself. "Now," said the chaplain, "while I hope that you will live to yet do much good in the world, yet, if it is the Father's good pleasure to take you to Heaven from Cuba, I have some messages which I want you to bear," and the old man grew more tender. "I have a mother who went to Heaven years ago. Tell her that I am keeping the promise that I made to her, and will meet her up there by and by."

"Then, you know," and he could not repress his tears, "I have a noble boy who bravely fell soon after we landed on this island. He, too, has gone up there. Tell him that his father is coming on."

The chaplain could not say any more, but sat there holding the soldier's hand while the soldier said, "God

bless you, chaplain! I want to thank you again and again for the great help you have been to me. Your trust is just like mother's—the sweetest, simplest thing in the world—and I am exercising something of the same."

Without hardly being conscious of it, Juanita was freely weeping, and when the chaplain saw it, he said, "My dear girl, are you a Christian? I hope you are, for God has endowed you with much to be grateful for."

"I thought I was a Christian," she sobbed, "but I am afraid that I was mistaken. I would give anything in the world for a trust like that you have and about which you so sweetly talk."

"You can have it for the asking"—he began to say, when he was suddenly called to go to see another soldier who was dangerously wounded.

"Oh, I wish he could have finished what he was going to say," she said half aloud.

"He said enough," answered the soldier.

"Why, can I have that simple trust just for the asking?" she eagerly inquired.

"Oh, yes," said he, and then told her how to find such texts as, "Ask, and ye shall receive," etc.; "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life, freely"; and that which she had a little while before read, "If ye will ask anything in my name, I will do it."

Juanita was called away to minister to some one *else*, but had heard sufficient to give her plenty to think about. "Oh," thought she, "if my grandfathers and grandmothers could have had *such* a comforter in their dying hours as this good man! If they could have had *such* a book as that one to read." Then, as she waited on a soldier who was bitterly cursing the Spanish because of the wound from which he suffered, she longed to be able to tell him of the Savior of whom she had just been hearing, and beg him to trust that Savior, but, alas! how little she knew!

So soon as she was at liberty to do so, she returned to the couch of the young Alabamian. He was quietly sleeping; at least, his eyes were closed, but his lips were moving. She listened carefully and heard him slowly saying, "Now I lay me down to sleep," etc. When the little prayer was completed, he continued, "Now, mother, sing the 'Trundle-Bed Song,' and let me go to sleep."

Then he was quiet, "*so quiet*," thought Juanita, that she was frightened, fearing that he was dead.

When she became satisfied that he was sweetly sleeping, she began again to think of the wonderful trust of which she had been hearing. Picking up the soldier's little Bible, she opened it. On the fly-leaf she read what his mother had written there for him. As she slowly turned through the book, she would stop now and

then to read some of its precious verses. By and by she became conscious that she was being watched, and looking up found the young soldier was intently gazing at her.

"I did not want to disturb you, but am so anxious to tell you of what a sweet dream I have had," he said. "Would you like to hear it?" Being answered in the affirmative, he continued, "I thought I was a little boy and at home again, and that after saying my little prayer at my mother's knee I went to sleep while she was singing what I used to call the 'Trundle-Bed Song,' and oh, how sweet to hear her voice again! And how near she seems now! Best of all, how close by my side the Savior seems to be!" The young man was very happy, seemed almost in a trance, but how strange it all seemed to Juanita.

Early the next morning she was hastily called to the Cuban hospital. She was greatly alarmed when she reached the bedside of her brother. His mind had been wandering, and he had several times called for his sister. While she sat by him he opened his eyes and, seeing her, smiled and said, "I am so glad that you have come, sister. You will not let them cut off my leg, will you?" She assured him they were not going to do that.

Looking inquiringly at her, he asked: "What are you going to do, my little sister, if I leave you?"

"Oh, brother dear, you must not talk that way. Of course," and she struggled to be calm, "you are going to get well, and when Cuba is free, we will go back to the United States and visits our friends there."

He shook his head and said, "Cuba will be free, and I would be most happy for us to visit our friends in the United States, but I have seen the doctors shaking their heads, and know they have no hope for this soldier-boy."

He continued, "Sister, is there a priest in the hospital? If there is, I would like to have him come to see me, and yet, if he is like the most of those we have seen during the last several years, I am sure it would do no good for me to see him."

She told him there was no priest in the hospital, but could hardly keep from suggesting the good chaplain whom she had met the day before. He guessed she had not said all that she wanted to say, and quickly asked, "What is it that you wanted to say, Juanita?"

This embarrassed her, and she was about to deny that she had anything else to say, when he exclaimed, "Now, my sister, you will not try to deceive your brother."

She bowed her head in distress and confusion. How much she would give if she just had that simple, beautiful religion of which she had heard the night before, and which she had seen so sweetly manifested. Looking up, she said, "You must forgive me, brother, if what I am

going to tell you shocks you. I was just wishing that the chaplain whom I saw in the United States hospital last night could come to see you."

"And why did you fear that such a suggestion would shock me?"

"Because he is Protestant—what our priests call a heretic." Then he told her that he was not satisfied with the religion they had been taught by the Catholic priests, and then alarmed her by saying very seriously, "It will not do for me to die as I am now."

She hid her face in agony, but instantly remembering that she must not give away to her feeling, she said, "But, brother, you must be more cheerful, and get well for your little sister's sake. Be brave like you are when you meet the Spaniards."

He smiled a grim smile, and just then Lucia came in, and seeing that Martinez was in his right mind (he *had* "come to himself"), she exclaimed, "I am so glad that you are better. I just knew it would make you better for this dear, good sister of yours to come."

"Thank you, Señorita Lucia, but I am not so sure that I am better. Please tell me what you think of us sending for a Protestant *padre*."

Lucia hastily and excitedly "crossed" herself, then looked at Juanita with an expression which too plainly said, "he is still in delirium;" and he understood her and

gave her a still greater shock by saying, "Do not be shocked. I am not delirious. Indeed, I have just come to my right mind for the first time in my life. There is no Catholic priest that would come to see me, and do you believe it is right to let me die without having some kind of a spiritual adviser? I want you and sister to help me to prevail upon mother to allow the chaplain at the United States hospital to come to see me. I believe you are a brave, wise girl and want your help. Will you please give it?"

She shuddered and said, "I respect and honor you, my brave captain, and am willing to do anything for you. Yes," and she deeply blushed, "I would lay down my life to save yours, but it is not wise to send for a *heretic* as a spiritual adviser. Oh, that would be horrible!"

He looked at Juanita, poor, distressed Juanita, and quietly remarked, "I will not insist."

CHAPTER XXXII.

Gonzalez was also in the Cuban hospital. In the battle he had escaped the Spanish bullets, but was immediately stricken down by the malarial fever, and the wound which he had received several months before was now giving him serious trouble.

Juanita, being assured by the attending physician that Martinez would last several days, even if he did not pass the crisis safely, returned in the afternoon to the other hospital, so that Beatriz could be allowed to visit her brother. She told Beatriz of the desire of Martinez, and asked her what to do. Beatriz counseled her to speak to the chaplain about it, and get his advice. This she resolved to do.

The wounded Alabamian greeted Juanita with a smile, and after saying that he was glad she had come back, asked very particularly as to how her brother was, for she had told him that she was going to see her brother. She answered as cheerfully as she could, but the keen eye of the young man detected an anxious, distressed look, and longed to be of help to her.

When she was asked if she would like to read some more to him from his little Bible, she gladly consented,

for she had been longing for more truths like those which had so stirred her heart. She found the chapters more readily than she had on the previous evening. He noted that fact, and supposed she had been studying her own Bible more closely. "You have a Bible of your own, have you not?" he asked. She answered in the negative, and added that few Cubans had such a possession.

He thought that strange, and asked, "Are your father and mother living?" When answered in the affirmative, he continued, "Have they no Bible of their own?" His questions were asked in such an artless way that she could not feel offended with him, but she began to feel greatly humiliated, and determined to deal frankly with him. So she said, "We have been brought up in the Roman Catholic Church, and have been taught that it is improper for the laity to read the Bible for themselves. The priests, bishops, and other high church officials claim the right of reading and interpreting the Bible for us."

At that he was much surprised, and told her how his father and mother, when the former was living, had loved and read their Bibles, and how they used to pray night and morning in the home with him and the other children.

"How beautiful that must have been," she thought, "and could God have been displeased to have them thus seek to honor him?"

As she went about her duties, she kept thinking on the things of which they had spoken. When she saw the chaplain had come for his round of visiting among the patients, she began to tremble with fear, for she could not prick up courage to speak to him of her brother's desire. All at once, she remembered, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," and before she realized what she was doing, this went up from her heart: "O Lord, give me courage to do my duty! I ask it in Jesus' name."

This visit of the chaplain to the Alabamian was even more happy than had been the one of the previous evening, and it was Juanita's privilege to be present through it all, and he spoke many kind and helpful words to her. When he learned that she had been to the Cuban hospital, he asked if there was any chaplain there, and was sorry to learn there was none.

Now was her time. She began to tremble. "What will mamma say?" she wondered. Then breathing that same little prayer for help, she told him of her brother's desire and distress, and asked his advice and help. She had supposed that he would want to go immediately to see her brother, and feared her mother would be angry with her, and felt sure Lucia would create a "scene."

Imagine her surprise when he said, "I would go to see your brother, and will gladly do so when it is wise,

but it will not be the best for the present. I had better wait until your father and mother are willing to invite me to come. In the meantime you may tell your brother that I will constantly pray for him, and that he must ask God for light and help. Then," and he earnestly looked into her face, "you must help your brother to the light."

"How can I, when I am in the dark myself?" she almost sobbed.

Then he took the Bible and read to her many precious promises and assurances, and secured a promise from her that she would pray and search for more light. After he was gone, she began to realize how deceived she had been when she had imagined that she was a good Christian. "Suppose," she asked herself, "I was where my brother is, could I feel that I was prepared to die?" The very question made her tremble in alarm.

She became more and more distressed, until she began to feel that she could hardly live. When Beatriz returned, she looked at Juanita in alarm, and exclaimed, "My dear little girl, are you sick? You must not grieve so about your brother. That will not save him." As she spoke she put her arm around Juanita, and gently drew her into their own private quarters.

Juanita broke down completely, and sobbed, "Of

course I am greatly distressed about brother, but just now I am more distressed about myself."

"*You* distressed about yourself?"

"Yes, yes," cried Juanita, and then a call hurried them away to their wards.

Juanita had been sent for by the young Alabamian, who was now slowly sinking. The dreaded crisis had come, and the surgeon had told him that he could not tide over it. He had sent for Juanita to make some final requests, but especially that he might help her. Trembling, she sat down by his side. She felt that she was in the presence of death, and how terrible it seemed to her, and there lay one before her who was meeting the monster as calmly as if it had been bearer of a gentle sleep.

The young man saw her agitation, and said, "Do not be afraid to hear my last words. Of course you will be so kind as to do those things that I have already requested. I have sent for you mainly for your own sake, and the most of the requests that I have now to make are in your own behalf. I know that you are greatly distressed about your own soul, and I have been earnestly praying for you and your brother. You have expressed an earnest desire for trust like I have, and the chaplain told you that it was yours for the asking. I tell you the

same; but best of all, the Bible tells you so. Will you have it? Will you have it *now*?"

Exhausted by his effort, and awaiting her answer, he calmly looked up into her face. For awhile she felt that she must cry aloud, so intense was her agony. "Oh, I have been such a great sinner that I do not deserve anything so sweet and blessed as the trust of which you speak. The very motive which governed me in seeking it was itself wickedly selfish. How can I ask so much of God?"

"Are you willing to trust the blessed Savior for it all?" asked the other.

"Yes, yes, I will trust him, and I do trust him this moment." She grew strangely calm, and the sweetest peace she had ever known came into her soul. The dying soldier saw it, and smiled, and whispered, "Praise the Lord! I can now die happy indeed. I have prayed that I might help some one to the Savior during my last hours."

A little later, mustering all of his remaining strength, he whispered to her, "I want to give you my little Bible, and desire that you write to mother and say that I gave it to you, the one who ministered to her son in his last hours in far-away Cuba. Will you accept it, and will you so write?"

Her heart was almost too full for utterance, but after a struggle she was able to thank him for the sweet privilege of accepting such a gift, and to tell him how grateful she was for the opportunity to serve the one who had led her into the light.

With a gratitude that was confused in its efforts to show its depths, she moistened his lips with cool water, and gently smoothed back the hair from his noble forehead. He smiled gratefully, and, closing his eyes, began to slowly repeat:

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul—to—take,
For—Jesus'—sake."

His lips ceased to move. There was no spirit within to move them—it had fled.

Juanita sat there as if dazed, and when Beatriz, who had stolen in just in time to witness the closing scene, gently touched her, she started, and looked as if just aroused from a dream in which she had witnessed a vision of wondrous beauty. Then, throwing her arms around Beatriz, she whispered: "Oh, it is glorious to die like that, if such a calm, peaceful close of this life can be called dying! In a case like this, one may well exclaim: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?'"

Then she took up the little Bible, the most precious gift she had ever received, and kissed it again and again. Had not Beatriz been in the ward in time to have witnessed the final scene, she would have thought the excited girl had become demented. As it was, she found herself longing for the peace which she knew reigned in Juanita's soul.

The ward into which what is called death had so silently stolen was set in order by the willing hands of Juanita, and, taking one more glance at the sleeper, she took up the little Bible—her *own* little Bible— and retired.

Very early the next morning a messenger came for her to go to her brother. As she hurried along, she could but note how bright and beautiful the world appeared. Its bright gladness seemed responding to the joy which welled up in her soul. Anxious about her brother she was, yea, distressed for his soul, but she felt that she was carrying the very balm that he needed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The crisis had come, and, at the time of the arrival of Juanita, there was no hope that Martinez would last through it. Indeed, he was thought to be sinking. The mother, looking despair itself, sat holding his hands; Juan, with his face buried in his hands, sat on the opposite side of the couch; while Lucia was gently bathing the fevered brow, now and then breathing a prayer to the "Holy Mother."

Alicia whispered to Martinez, who opened his eyes, and, seeing Juanita, faintly smiled and made an offer to raise his hand. She knelt down next to her mother and took the hand she had seen him try to raise. He looked at her inquiringly, and asked: "Did you bring the priest?"

The mother quickly answered: "My precious boy, there is no priest in reach."

"I mean the Protestant minister. Sister, did you bring him?"

Lucia "crossed" herself, Juan raised his head and glanced at Alicia, who looked as if a sword had pierced her heart.

Juanita, oblivious of all the others, gently replied:

"No, brother, but I have brought one who is a great deal better. I have brought the blessed Savior. He is in my heart, and here is his blessed Word," and she held up the little Bible. "In this Word he bids all sinful, sorrowing, weary ones come unto him, and he will give them rest for their souls."

"Will he save a sinner like me?" he anxiously asked.

"Oh, yes; he has saved me, and his Bible says: 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth.' Again: 'Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.'"

"Are those words in the Bible? If so, please read them to me," Martinez said earnestly.

She eagerly read these and several others of the texts which the Alabamian had instructed her to mark for herself. She read in the English, and none of the others understood. No one interposed, though Lucia, poor, deluded, but honest girl, wondered why the father and mother did not stop the proceedings.

The truth is, the father was much in sympathy with what was being done, and the mother would have suffered all of her household gods—all of her most cherished notions—demolished, if only her boy could receive the comfort and help that he needed in that hour.

Finally, Martinez, speaking in Spanish, asked: "Sister, will you pray with me?"

She had not expected this, and, for a moment, she was abashed, but, breathing her little prayer for help, she began talking to God, just like she would talk to a trusted friend. She did not know how else to pray, and who knows a better way?

The father and mother sank on their knees at the bedside, Lucia knelt at its foot, and Eleanor, coming in at the moment, knelt beside her sister. It was an awe-inspiring scene. As Juanita poured forth her soul in simple, earnest words, Lucia and Eleanor looked a time or two to see whom the petitioner was addressing, feeling that he must be visibly present.

When Juanita ceased and arose from her knees, a sweet calm of perfect resignation filled her soul, and she could say without the least reservation, "God's will be done." Her brother looked at her gratefully, and then closed his eyes. The act seemed to indicate that he was too exhausted to then make further inquiry.

Soon he breathed as if he had fallen into a peaceful slumber. Juanita beckoned to her father and he went to her. This was the first time she had seen him since the awful battle, and she put her arms around his neck, and showered glad kisses upon his sunburnt face. She whispered: "I thank God that he spared you in that awful battle!"

Then she and her father went into the ward where Gonzalez was lying. He received them cheerfully, saying that he was much better, though his shoulder was still giving him considerable pain. "Yes," remarked Juanita, "that is what you are suffering for me, Beatriz, and mamma. How I wish I could help you to bear the pain!"

"You are helping me," gratefully responded Gonzalez, and then, seeing the little Bible in her hand, "but what is that you have there?"

"Oh, it is a Bible, my own dear Bible, and its precious truths have made me so happy that I want to tell the whole world about it."

She spoke in the English, because she did not think her father was yet prepared to sympathize with her. Gonzalez reached for the Bible, and turning it over in his hands, and looking at it, said: "Sit down here, and tell me all about it."

She sat down upon the little seat at the bedside, and, looking up at her father, asked, "Papa, would you like to hear about it, too?"

"Yes, my little daughter," he replied, in a tone which made her heart leap for joy.

When she was through with the story of the young Alabamian, there was a stillness which was felt in that ward. Gonzalez, feeling that he was expected to say

something, cleared his throat and made the effort, but, failing, he turned his face to the wall.

Thinking it best to leave him to his thoughts, she joined her father for a walk, after they had glanced in to see that Martinez was still sleeping. During the walk she told him how happy she was, and asked him to forgive her if she had caused him pain in what she had done with her brother. He was too full for words, but stooped and imprinted a kiss upon each of her cheeks. That was all the approval she wanted, and now she was even more happy than before.

When the hospital surgeon came in to see Martinez, he looked surprised and pleased, saying as Martinez looked inquiringly into his face: "Be careful with yourself, my boy, and you will yet be able to make the Spaniard feel the mettle of your machete." Juanita entered just in time to hear the speech and to see the pleasant smile on the surgeon's face, and hastened to stoop down and kiss the fevered brow.

The next morning the crisis had entirely passed, and Martinez was much better. He and his sister talked as long as it was deemed wise for him to talk at one time, then he told her that she must return to her post, but must come to see him as often as she could, and to always bring the little Bible.

Her father attended the funeral services held over the body of the young Alabamian, and was much interested waiting to have his daughter present him to the good chaplain.

Juanita called upon the brave Gualterio each time that she had visited the Cuban hospital. While she had longed to tell him how happy she was, and to show him her little Bible, telling of the one who gave it to her, still she felt that it was unwise to do so for the present. Indeed, she was afraid his sisters would forbid such a thing. He was rapidly improving, and each of her visits left him more cheerful. His sisters were beginning to find how much he loved Juanita, and they, especially Lucia, accused him of being untrue to his first love. But Eleanor felt that Lucia was the last one who should press such an accusation. Even Gualterio had observed how anxious Lucia was about Martinez.

Before these hospital patients were able to leave their wards, the city and the Province of Santiago de Cuba had been surrendered to the Americans; and by the time they were able to walk into the city, hostilities had ceased and a peace commission had been appointed by the United States and Spain.

Juanita wrote a long letter to the mother of the young Alabamian, and a letter to Lieutenant Carlton also, though sending that letter was a little embarrassing

to her. In due time, a tender, grateful, weeping letter came from the mother, who earnestly begged Juanita to write again. A letter from the lieutenant recited the many earnest efforts he had made to learn the whereabouts of her brother and herself. It closed with an earnest request that she write him again and by saying that it had been reported that their regiment would soon be sent to Cuba. Try to disguise it as she might, she was glad of this last probability.

She was rejoiced to find that her brother as he gained strength did not lose interest (as is so often the case) in the truths of religion. He felt that God had spared him for some noble purpose, but he had been so deceived by the priesthood in the religion taught him from childhood that he had grown skeptical, and hesitated to receive any doctrine. Then he hated the Spanish with what he regarded an undying hatred. How could he forgive those who had literally starved his grandparents to death and had tried to do the same for his mother and his sister! Most of all, how could he ever forgive the one who sought to do what would have been far worse than death for his mother and sister.

The battles which he fought on these fields were more desperate than any fought for Cuba's freedom. His brave and earnest little sister helped him all that she

could. She showed him how the pure and blessed Jesus had forgiven his enemies.

Another serious hindrance in the way of both Martinez and his father, so far as the Protestant phase of Christianity was concerned, was the fact that such a large proportion of the United States soldiers seemed to have no reverence for God, but were outrageously profane. The Cubans, knowing that the United States was counted a Protestant country, naturally judged that religion by the character of the soldiers coming from this country.

It was not all easy and happy sailing with Juanita. She found her mother was very unhappy to have her daughter accept what she regarded as the religion of the heretics. True she had not used words of disapproval, but her pained looks made it harder for Juanita than it would have been had her mother spoken what was in her mind. In that case Juanita would have had opportunity to give the reasons for the faith that was in her. Yet, in her heart, Alicia could but feel that God had spared the life of her son in answer to the work and prayers of Juanita. But, oh, the idea of one of her children going off after the religion of the heretics! That was terrible!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Now that the war was virtually over, our friends, especially was it so with the women, were free to go where they pleased, but where could Beatriz, Alicia and Juanita go? Their homes had been destroyed, and all they had were the meager wardrobes they possessed. In free Cuba they were desolate.

Lucia and Eleanor kindly begged the others to go home with them at present, but they had not heard from their home since they escaped from it, and how did they know they had any home? Besides, how could they reach far-away Matanzas? In the hearts of Juanita and her mother there was another reason why they did not want to go to Matanzas: Their old enemy probably still lived in that end of the island. They could not realize that Alonzo Menendez had now lost his power.

There were some things which were encouraging. Beatriz and Juanita, in their hospital work among the Americans, had become intimate with the superintendent of the Red Cross Society work there, and when, in their extremity, they went to her, she promised at least temporary work to the women in aiding to distribute supplies among the *reconcentrados*.

Moreover, when Juanita confided their condition to the good chaplain, he secured immediate employment for Beatriz and Juanita as interpreters for some United States officers. Then he also suggested that they might secure lucrative employment in teaching the English to the Cuban merchants, professional men, and others who were anxious to learn it. As for Juanita she would soon be greatly needed in the Protestant missionary work, if she was disposed to give herself to it.

When, therefore, the hospital corps was disbanded, Beatriz and Juanita soon had employment that was quite lucrative, as teachers of the English and as interpreters, and the others were employed by the Red Cross Society representatives.

General Gomez soon began preparations to move his troops westward to await instructions looking to their being disbanded. Gonzalez was gaining strength only very slowly, and was not able to make the trip overland, nor was it deemed wise for Martinez to undertake it, even if he had been willing to leave his mother and sister amid their present surroundings. Juan and Gualterio made ready to go on with the army, the latter having almost entirely recovered from his wound.

Lucia and Eleanor insisted that they could make the journey across the country, at least as far as Santa

Clara, where they could probably take a railroad-train for home, but Gualterio would not consent to their undertaking it. Finally it was agreed that they should remain until he could go home and learn the condition of things there.

As the time for the departure of the soldiers drew near, Gualterio became more and more depressed in his feelings. His sisters noticed his gloominess, and asked him the cause, but he only gave an evasive answer to their questions. Juanita was not so blind as not to discover the change, and she was more successful in learning its cause than were his sisters. When she questioned him as to the cause of his depression, he frankly confessed that it was the thought of separation from her.

This made the situation exceedingly embarrassing to her. She had told him the story as to how she had come into possession of her little Bible, and he had been deeply interested in it and much moved by it. She had also told him of her own great happiness in trusting in the Savior, and had urged him to accept the Savior. At first, like his sisters, he had been shocked at the thought of being pressed to accept anything connected with Protestantism, but she had diligently persevered until she now began to have some hope of winning him to the Savior.

Another source of embarrassment to Juanita was in the fact, which she had learned through his sisters, of his former attachment to the Spanish señorita who had been so efficient in securing the escape of his sisters. She held Gualterio in very high esteem, and felt under deep and lasting obligations to him for having more than once risked his life to save hers. Besides, he was a noble, heroic spirit worthy of the esteem of any one.

After much earnest thought and prayer concerning the matter, she determined to take counsel with her mother—a very wise thing for a young lady to do, whether in Cuba or America. Her mother advised that it would be both prudent and just for Juanita not to make any pledges to him as to the future, but to treat him most kindly. She decided to take her mother's advice.

The last interview between Gualterio and Juanita was a trying one to both of them, but she held firmly to the course she had determined upon, and he acquiesced with a gallantry equal to the courage he had so often displayed upon the battle-field, though it cost him the severest struggle of his life. But when he went away, whether either of them was conscious of it or not, he had won the highest admiration of a certain beautiful Cuban señorita, and occupied a loftier place in her esteem than ever before. This is saying much, for from the time he

had so generously and bravely aided in the first rescue of her father he had constantly grown in her esteem.

One thing especially saddened her more than she could tell. It was that he had not yet accepted the Savior of her Bible. To see him and her father, who had not yet come into the light, though he had been earnestly seeking it since the day he attended the funeral of the young Alabamian, go away without having accepted Christ was a great sorrow to her.

Just when the earnest, young Christian was about to become almost utterly discouraged in her efforts in the Savior's cause, a great joy came to her desponding heart. Beatriz became a happy convert. Now Juanita had at least one who could sympathize with her in all of her joys, sorrows, and labors. The two immediately covenanted together to pray for all of their party, and especially for their brothers.

About a month after the army had gone away, a letter, written in camp near Nazareno, came from Juan. It told much of the desolation which existed in that region. He advised that it was best for the members of his family to give up all thought of coming to live in the neighborhood of their last mountain home.

A little later a letter came from Gualterio to his sisters, bringing the sad news that their home had been destroyed and nearly all of their mother's property con-

fiscated. The mother and the children who were still with her had come very near perishing for food. Benito Ramon and his sister Isabelita, who had so generously aided Lucia and Eleanor to escape, had come very near losing their lives, because they had been suspected of sympathizing with the Calderins. Now that it was safe for them to do so, the parents of Benito had taken Señora Calderin and the children into their home, while Gualterio was putting up a house that would serve as a temporary home for his mother and family.

This news was a sad blow to Lucia and Eleanor, and they were greatly depressed by it. Then came a letter from Benito to Lucia, giving the additional news that he had been dismissed in disgrace from the Spanish army because of the interest he was suspected of having in the Calderins.

The contents of this last letter seemed to make Lucia far more wretched than the other news. These sisters were almost crushed, but they found warm and capable sympathizers in the other members of the party. Beatriz and Juanita were especially active in their efforts to console the sisters, and longed to help them with some of the precious promises in their Bible, but dared not undertake that.

Martinez was deeply touched by the effect of the sad news upon Lucia, and earnestly sought to cheer her, but

his efforts made her only the more unhappy. Indeed, she not only treated him coldly, but his very interest in her seemed to irritate her.

For days, Lucia was too much depressed to mix with the others of the party, and became morose. Alicia became alarmed for her. It was only Eleanor who could guess at what was the greatest cause of her sister's suffering, and she could but feel that her sister deserved to suffer some.

The women were still earnestly engaged in their various labors, and were making more than enough money to support the little company. But Gonzalez and Martinez were not gaining much strength, and it was becoming more and more evident that a change of climate and surroundings, as had been advised by the physicians, would be necessary.

There was not yet enough money in the treasury of the company to enable its members to travel very far, especially at the exorbitant rates of passage charged by the Menendez steamer line, which still had a monopoly of carrying passengers and freight along the south coast of the island.

A Protestant missionary had begun work in Santiago. Beatriz and Juanita were helping much, but the missionary was not yet able to secure any salary for them. They had been helping especially with the music in the

general services and in the Sunday-school. They had also aided in organizing the day schools.

There was no open protest on the part of Señora Olivera against Juanita doing this work, but her very silence was painful to the earnest workers. As for Gonzalez and Martinez they sometimes attended the meetings of the mission, but found fault because the negroes were mixed with the Cubans in the services. The opposition on the part of Lucia and Eleanor was not as vigorous as it had been.

CHAPTER XXXV.

When a change for the sake of Gonzalez and Martinez became necessary, as good fortune—rather good providence—would have it, the way was open. Some of the United States officials who had Beatriz and Juanita employed as interpreters were ordered to visit several important places along the south coasts of the island. The work they were required to do at these places would make their interpreters very necessary. They not only secured passage on the United States ship for Beatriz and Juanita, but for the whole party.

It was not without regret that some of the little party left Santiago. Especially did Juanita feel that she had many precious memories binding her to the place. The missionary and those whom he had gathered into the mission exceedingly regretted to give up their two earnest helpers.

As the United States transport on which they had taken passage steamed out of the harbor, passing by the Spanish ship which had sunk from injuries received the morning Cervera's fleet was annihilated, along by the sunken Merrimac, and under the frowning heights of Morro castle, these places of interest with others were

pointed out by the American officials, who were specially courteous to the ladies of the party.

Until Cape Crux was rounded, as is usual on that part of the Caribbean Sea, the voyage proved a rough one, but when they headed towards Manzanillo it became delightfully smooth. As the voyagers entered the harbor of Manzanillo, the ruins of two Spanish gunboats were pointed out, and then, in the harbor, there were ruins of another gunboat and of two ships belonging to the Menendez steamer line. The destruction of all these were brought about by the United States fleet.

The stay of several days in that beautiful city proved an interesting and delightful one. Aside from the work of interpreting, Beatriz and Juanita, aided by the other women, did much in the way of visiting and helping the sick and the poor. They found no church of any kind there, and the young Christians did not confine their work to helping the bodies of those visited, but they tried to feed their poor starving souls. Sometimes they even ventured to pray with the sick. Some work was done at the United States barracks, among the soldiers.

After stopping at several other places along the coast, they went on to Trinidad. Before reaching the harbor at that port the ship encountered a severe storm. At times wreck seemed inevitable. Most of the passengers were alarmed while many were greatly excited. The

great calm which marked the conduct of Beatriz and Juanita was consequently the more noticeable. Especially was it observed by Alicia who was much frightened. So soon as opportunity offered she asked Juanita how she and Beatriz could be so calm under such trying circumstances.

This gave Juanita the very opportunity for which she had been longing and praying. Breathing her little prayer for help, she gladly proceeded to answer her mother's question. She now and then even ventured to appeal to the blessed assurance of protection found in her little Bible, and rejoiced when she observed the deep interest her mother took in all that was said. Had she known how her mother was praying directly to God, she would have been still more rejoiced.

It was late in the night ere they ceased to talk. Even then Alicia did not go to sleep, but continued to meditate and pray. She dwelt upon the scene at the bedside of her son when he was thought to be dying. She had again and again noted how anxious Juanita was about Martinez, and had begun to feel that she herself might be standing in the way of her son's salvation. At times her agony was very great.

By and by, she began to feel that she would have to give up most of the teaching she had received from the priests of the "Holy Catholic" Church, and there had

been times in her life when she would far rather have died than do that. The struggle, rather the culmination of the struggle which began on that day at her son's bedside, was more terrific than can be described, but the victory was won, and the most triumphant joy and sweetest peace that had ever quickened her being came into her life.

That happened at break of day, an appropriate hour for this new light to come into her being. Juanita was sweetly sleeping, but her mother's heart was too full of joy to wait, and the daughter was aroused, and now her cup was full to the brim and running over. Oh, the joy of that hour! The rejoicing of the two awakened Beatriz who was occupying the same stateroom, and it was hard to tell who of the three was the most happy.

The ship had been standing for most of the night at anchor, in the port of Trinidad, and when the whole company gathered on the deck preparatory to going ashore, Gonzalez and Martinez thought they had never before seen three women so radiant with joy. Martinez could not wait until they were ashore to know the cause of this manifestation. He knew there were no pleasant memories in his mother's mind associated with Trinidad. "Mother dear," he exclaimed, "what has happened that you, Señorita Beatriz and sister are so radiant this

morning? Are you just glad because you did not go down in the storm yesterday?"

Her only reply at that moment was to pull his face down to hers, imprint a kiss upon his cheek, and whisper something in his ear. That, it would seem to those standing by, was reply enough, for he grew serious, looked at her in amazement, and turned away to hide his emotion.

Even amid the excitement attending the landing, he had time for such thoughts as these: "If mother, who from childhood has loved and cherished the teachings of the 'Holy Catholic' Church, can now break away from some of the most cherished of those teachings, and can have such evident joy in the breaking away, what about myself?" He had felt that his life had been spared in direct answer to his sister's prayers, and he now felt that he was guilty of base ingratitude to God in longer holding himself away from consecration to God. Then that old thought, "How can I forgive my enemies?" came up.

The United States officials were to go no further west than Trinidad, and, as its mountain climate made it such a splendid place to spend the fall days, the members of the Cuban party resolved to spend considerable time there, and rented a building large enough to accommodate the whole party, arranging to "have all things in common" for the time being.

González and Martínez had so improved since leaving Santiago that they hardly looked like the same persons. They gladly assisted their sisters in securing classes among those who wished to learn the English, and did some work themselves in the line of interpreters. Also insisted on accompanying Alicia and the Calderins in the work among the poor and sick.

As a recreation, an hour or so of each day was spent in visiting the places of interest in the city and in its immediate vicinity. Several visits were made to the high point back of the city, and from which such a splendid view is had of the sea and the surrounding country, including the lofty mountains in the distance. Considerable time, in the evenings, was spent in the city park, which is pronounced the finest in all Cuba.

Alicia's memories of her last visit to Trinidad were not pleasant, but she was ready to point out the place where her husband had been imprisoned, and the city hall which she had visited when seeking his release. She also pointed out the market where she purchased the stale bread that proved so serviceable. Juanita and Martínez interested themselves trying to identify the spot where they had been thrown from the horse's back.

When Alicia with the others visited the beautiful churches, she could but contrast her religious feelings with what they were on that sad day, when she went

into one of them to count her beads and to appeal to the "Holy Mother" for help in distress. She now loved to go into the churches to pray, but was pained by the cold formality and superstition which marked the public services.

In spite of the pleasant surroundings compared to what they had been, Lucia and Eleanor, especially the first, were growing restless. Another letter from Gualterio informed them that he had so far completed the house that his mother had moved into it. Lucia was anxious to go home, yet, at times, she shrank from the thought of going. She had recovered from her moroseness and was more pleasant toward Martinez.

As the winter days began to come on, all the members of the party began to grow anxious for a change. Just at that time, Juan gave them a happy surprise by coming in for a short stay. To him the monotony of the camp life was becoming almost unbearable. The leaders had thought it best to keep the Cuban soldiers together until the agreement between the peace commissioners had been ratified by the governments of the United States and Spain, or at least until all the Spanish troops had been removed from the island. The date for the formal evacuation of the island by the Spanish had been definitely fixed by the United States for January 1, 1899.

Gomez expected to move on toward Havana before

that date, and Juan deemed it best for his family to go on toward that place. If they were only in Cienfuegos, they could soon reach Havana by railroad, but they would have to patronize the hated Menendez steamer line, with its exorbitant rates and other wickedness, in order to reach Cienfuegos by sea.

While this was being discussed, they were informed by some United States officers that a United States transport was soon to call at Trinidad, on its way to Tampa, Florida. It was going to bring troops over to Cuba. These officers felt sure they could secure passage on this ship for the party to Tampa. From that place there was a regular line of steamers to Havana by way of Key West. This pleased Juan, for he thought that both the voyage and a stay in Tampa would be of benefit to Gonzalez and Martinez. So all the members of the company except the Calderins and Juan decided to take this route.

Lucia and Eleanor insisted that they could go across the country with Juan to Santa Clara. Thence they could go by rail to Matanzas. The others tried to dissuade them from undertaking it, but they insisted that they were equal to the journey. So preparations for the goings were begun and soon completed.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

It was a sad day when that little circle of patriotic women was broken up. They had suffered so many things in common that they were closely knit together. To Juanita the separation was specially painful, because she had failed to persuade Lucia and Eleanor to accept the Savior of her Bible.

The separation cost Lucia far more than she had imagined it would. There had been a hard struggle going on in her heart since the receipt of the first letter from Benito—a struggle in which she stood alone, and at times she felt unequal to the odds against her. She did not venture to confide her trouble to even her sister, though her sister had guessed something of its nature.

Lucia had really never felt unkindly toward Martinez, but had treated him coldly in order that she might the more easily prove true to the one who had loved her so long and had endured so much for her. She had begun to feel that she was winning the victory, but, as the hour for parting with Martinez drew near, she found her resolution was weakening. To make the struggle more severe, it was easy for her to see that Martinez was deeply pained at the thought of separation.

He loved Lucia more than he had allowed himself to think. He guessed something of the contest which had been going on in her heart, and her brave effort to be true to the gallant Spaniard only raised her in his estimation.

The evening before the sisters were to start, the whole party made a farewell visit to the park. Martinez was with Lucia, and was the first to speak of the coming separation. He told her how much he admired her devotion to the cause of Cuba, how he appreciated what she had done and suffered for its freedom. Then, with deep pathos and tenderness, thanked her for all her kindness to him, and especially for saving his life on the battlefield, and for her faithfulness in the hospital when he was at the point of death. There were tears of gratitude in his eyes as he thus spoke to her; and, when she turned her look gratefully upon him, he saw the tears streaming down her face. Her lips quivered with emotion as she thanked him for his kind words. She said she was only sorry that she had not been able to do a thousand times more for the freedom of Cuba, and was grateful if she had been of any help and comfort to him.

He had not said all that he wanted to, but found himself trembling as he had never trembled when going into battle. With a desperate effort he began to tell her how much he loved her personally, but she turned upon

him a look of such utter wretchedness that he quailed before it. Her voice trembled with deepest emotion when she tried to speak. After some hesitation, she said: "My dear friend, are you determined to break my already crushed and bleeding heart? Or what is far worse, would you cause me to prove untrue to one who has loved me from childhood and has suffered all he could suffer for me?" Then without waiting for reply, she, with something like a superhuman effort, fled from him, and joined the others of the party who were seated not far away.

Martinez sat as if paralyzed. The others, though busy discussing their plans for the future, could but observe that she was excited. She asked Beatriz to promenade with her for a little while. When Beatriz affectionately put her arm about her and they began to walk, she found the poor girl trembling like a leaf, and earnestly inquired, "Dear Lucia, what ails you? What has happened?" The other, after considerable struggle for utterance, cried out, "Oh, I am *so* unhappy, and I must tell my misery to some one or it will kill me!"

Encouraged by Beatriz, she spoke of how she had loved Benito—had loved him from childhood, and of how true he had been to her, and at what cost. Then she spoke of her esteem for Martinez, and how it had insensibly grown into love, and what a battle her efforts

to conquer it had cost her. That she had sometimes been led to feel that she had conquered it, only to find that she had failed.

Beatriz made an honest and earnest effort to help Lucia, but felt that she was succeeding but poorly. One person, no matter how wise, can not help another much in fighting out a battle like that. It was a relief to both when Juan suggested that it was time for all to return to the house. To relieve the situation, Beatriz cheerfully called Martinez to join her and Lucia while her brother should escort Eleanor and Juanita.

It was little that Martinez slept that night, and as for Lucia, she was wretched beyond all power of words to describe. Afraid to trust herself, she did not appear next morning until everything was in readiness for them to start. When she did come she was heavily veiled, and said good-by to those who were not going in a constrained, formal way.

Martinez was deeply troubled, but believed he now understood Lucia, and felt that he would rather die than add one pang to what she already suffered. In spite of her prejudices, Lucia was thrilled by the earnest "God bless you!" Juanita whispered while warmly embracing her.

Saddle-horses had been secured for Lucia and Eleanor, and they did not fear the hardships attending

the long ride over a very rough country, along roads that were often no more than dim trails. Juan had much to tell them of the numerous places of interest along the way. They were specially glad to have him show them the spot where once stood the little mountain village where Martinez and Juanita were born. They remembered their brother and Martinez had told them of the desperate fight they had there with the Spanish.

It was nearly sundown when they reached Nazareno. The night was spent there with a poor man, who with a few others, had had the temerity to undertake to live there. On the third day they reached Santa Clara, and the señoritas were weary enough to be glad to resign their horses for even a very rough railroad-coach.

Only two days after the farewell to the little party going over the mountains, our other friends were launched for travel over the seas. Alicia had never gone away from her native island, and as the ship bearing them steamed away, she sat on deck to watch the last fading lines of the mountain-peaks. Then she unconsciously heaved a little sigh and wiped away a tear. As they were hurried away toward the west, they had a glimpse of the Isle of Pines, and just as they turned north toward Florida they caught a farewell sight of the Island of Cuba.

Reaching Tampa, they took up temporary residence in West Tampa, where the most of the population was Cuban. Juan had urged them to spend several weeks in Florida, feeling that it would prove beneficial to Gonzalez and Martinez. Then it would allow time for things to become somewhat settled in Havana.

The three women, in the freshness of their religious joy, could not long remain idle. They soon found the mission among the Cubans under the general superintendence of Miss Mary Bruce, and under the immediate direction of a native Cuban, Señorita Emelina Valdez, with several assistants.

Like Alicia, Señorita Valdez had been brought up a strict Roman Catholic, and the struggle to give up the teachings of the mother church had been a most terrible one, but now she was happy in her work as a Protestant. She introduced her new-made friends to Miss Bruce, who showed them much kindness, insisting that they must spend much time with her in the mission school and home in Ybor City, where a great work was being done among the Cuban children. They gladly accepted her invitation.

Especially were Beatriz and Juanita glad of the opportunity to see the work and study it, for they were contemplating entering upon mission work in Cuba, just as soon as they should open up for them. This desire

was greatly quickened by their association with Miss Bruce and her colaborers.

There in Tampa they found much suffering among the Cuban refugees, and they gladly assisted the missionaries in distributing food among the destitute ones. They met a native of Cuba, Rev. H. B. Someillan, who was expecting to soon go to Cuba as a missionary. They told him much about the conditions of things in Santiago de Cuba and Trinidad.

Gonzalez and Martinez also took much interest in what the Protestants were doing for the Cubans in Florida, and they attended the Protestant services regularly. Martinez took his mother to one of the largest Protestant churches in Tampa, and interpreted much of the sermon for her. It was preached by a bishop who was then on his way to Cuba to establish missions there. Martinez was deeply impressed by the sermon, as were he and Gonzalez by one preached that evening by a missionary secretary who was soon to travel extensively in Cuba in the interest of Christian missions there.

As it happened, the little Cuban party took passage for Cuba on the same steamer on which the bishop, his wife, the missionary secretary, and other Protestant preachers were going. The simplicity of manner which characterized these high church officials and

the freedom with which they mingled with the other passengers seemed strange to our Cuban friends. Alicia had never before seen anything like it, but rejoiced in this new evidence of the simplicity of the true gospel which had made her so happy.

On the advice of Miss Bruce, and especially to gratify Beatriz and Juanita, the members of the Cuban party decided to stop over a few days in Key West, to study the operations of the missions established there among the Cubans. They were delighted when they found the bishop and his company were going to do the same thing.

In Key West they met the earnest missionaries, Misses Edington and Ford, and were deeply impressed by the zeal and consecration manifested by those young women. The pastor of the Cuban mission church there was a native of Cuba.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

It was with a mingled feeling of pain and pleasure that some of the company entered the Havana harbor that November morning. Martinez and Juanita could but be reminded of the distressing circumstances under which they had entered that harbor once before. After the landing, rooms were taken at Hotel Roma, and Gonzalez and Martinez started out in search of a house suited for permanent quarters. It was only natural that they should want to visit the homes where they had formerly lived. To their surprise they found the home of the Oliveras for rent, and with heavy furniture. Their surprise was increased when Martinez discovered that the furniture was the same once owned by his father and mother.

They sought the agent who had the renting of the house, and, the terms suiting them, secured it for one month with the privilege of retaining it longer if they desired. Martinez was pleased with the thought of spending at least a little time in the home where his youth had been so happily spent, but it would be hard to imagine the consternation of his mother and sister.

When he saw their distress and learned its cause, he

confessed that he had not thought of the probability of Alonzo Menendez having anything to do with the house, but now, that he had thoughtlessly been guilty of the imprudence of renting the house and of paying a month's rent, which they were little able to lose, he begged his mother and sister to be brave enough to spend at least one month there. At the same time he reminded them that Alonzo would be powerless to harm them, and that he would be glad enough to let "by-gones be by-gones."

When Juanita begged that other quarters, no matter how poor, might be secured, Martinez exclaimed, "O you little woman, who manifested such peaceful calm amid the storm on the sea, does not the God whom you serve rule on the land as well as on the sea?"

Juanita felt the force of the rebuke, and praying again her first little prayer for help, she confessed that she should not have felt any fear. Her mother and Beatriz rallied to her, and the next day they moved in the few effects they had. It must be confessed that these little women were happier when they learned that Alonzo Menendez was out of the city at present.

Martinez had almost entirely recovered from his wound, and wrote to his father to come home awhile so as to let him report to his command for service. It was a surprise to Juan to learn that his family was living in

the old home, but he admired the courage which led them to take it. Moreover, he began to suspect that the house had never been sold as confiscated property, but had been seized and held by Alonzo Menendez. If this should prove true, then he was determined to do his best to recover it. To some, such an undertaking might seem rash, but he felt that it would be right, and that ought to be sufficient.

Juan came to Havana to spend some time and Martinez reported at army headquarters for duty, but soon returned to Havana on special permit, after finding that he could be of no special service to himself or any one else remaining in camp.

It was December before Alonzo returned home. Hearing that the Olivera house was rented, but not dreaming who its occupants were, he called in one day. When he found himself confronted at the door by Juan Olivera, he was as amazed as he could have been had it been a specter instead of a real piece of humanity. When invited to come in, he began stammering out something in a confused sort of way, and, recovering himself, he requested Juan Olivera to call at his office the next day, as he was wanted on special business. This done, he bowed himself out of the house and retired.

Juan was amused at the servility of the once haughty Spaniard, and laughed at the fears of his wife when she suggested that Alonzo might yet be seeking to do them harm. The next day, when Juan called at the Menendez office, he was as not as much surprised as might have been imagined to have Alonzo say that he had preserved the home from confiscation, and that he now gladly turned it over to its proper owner. Juan believed enough of the story to unhesitatingly accept the home. A genuine surprise did await him. That came when Alonzo said that he had been able to keep the house rented most of the time, and proceeded to turn over to Juan the amount of the rent less the taxes which he had paid on the property. There was great joy in the Olivera home that night.

On an evening in December there occurred a very unhappy collision between some Spanish and Cuban officers. A prominent Cuban, General Garcia, had died in the United States. When the news reached Havana, a Cuban army officer went to the theaters that were open and asked them to suspend their performances in respect to the memory of General Garcia. The one under the management of Cubans readily granted the request, but another, controlled by Spaniards, refused, and the Cuban officer was insulted. For a time there was a fearful melee, during which many shots were

fired. A Cuban was killed, but peace was finally restored.

Great preparations were being made for the evacuation ceremonies. The city of Havana, especially the streets along which the United States soldiers were to march, was handsomely decorated, the United States and Cuban flags keeping each other company. The Cuban soldiers were much disappointed that, owing to several such collisions between the Spanish and the Cubans as the one referred to, it had been decided by those in authority that it would not be wise to allow the Cuban soldiers, as a body, to participate in the ceremonies. However, some of the Cuban general officers were invited and were present at the captain-general's palace, at the hour of the evacuation.

Gualterio and his sisters and some of their friends were to be guests in the Olivera home. Their coming was looked forward to with a strange mixture of feeling in some whom they were to visit. Both Martinez and Juanita were in great trepidation, but each was diligently concealing his feelings from the other. They dreaded the coming of Gualterio and Lucia, and yet would be painfully disappointed should they fail to come. It was hard for them to analyze their own feelings, besides they were averse to having any analysis made. To the credit of both of them be it said that they

had resolved to make any sort of honorable sacrifice rather than even tempt Gualterio and Lucia to be untrue to their obligations to others.

Very soon after their arrival in Havana, Alicia and Juanita hunted up Rev. I. Y. Barredo, a native missionary to whom Miss Bruce had given them a letter of introduction, and were already helping him in his work. It is not strange that they felt themselves strongly drawn toward him and his family, when they found that, like themselves, he and his family had been called upon to suffer terrible things during the dark days of the war. Through it all the missionary stood faithfully at his post, though it often seemed that he and his family would perish for food in spite of all they could do. Beatriz was also assisting in the work. All of them had several times attended the services at the mission superintended by Dr. A. Diaz.

On the evening of December 30th, Gualterio and his party arrived. They were met at the Luz wharf by Martinez and his sister. Benito and Isabelita Ramon accompanied the Calderins. Though Benito had been a Spanish soldier, he and his sister received a cordial welcome. They were already loved and honored for what they had done for the Calderins.

For awhile the Spaniards were evidently under constraint, but the cordiality of their entertainers soon

made them forget their embarrassment, and they were found to be admirable guests. Benito pleasantly suggested that it looked a little remarkable for him and his sister, with their Spanish proclivities, to come all the way from Matanzas to see their own folks surrender, and that they should be so delightfully entertained in a home where three Cuban soldiers resided. Then, with a merry twinkle of the eye, he remarked: "It is immensely more comfortable to meet Cuban soldiers at the table than it is to meet them on the battle-field."

This was the signal for many like pleasantries, and all seemed to be most happy even if their company was somewhat mixed, but no one suggested a solution to the question as to how it came about that there was such beautiful harmony of feeling amid such marked difference of sentiment. It was love which had bridged the chasm. It is capable of bridging some very deep and wide chasms and of climbing some very high and rugged mountains.

Early on the morning of evacuation day, the people began to pour into the streets of Havana. United States troops were marching and countermarching about the streets, and more of them than usual were placed around the palace of Captain-General Castellanos. The few Spanish soldiers remaining in the city were gathered about the same place. By ten o'clock,

the United States generals began to gather at the palace, and General Fitzhugh Lee, at the head of the Seventh Army Corps, was marching into the city.

Gonzalez had been requested to serve as an interpreter at the palace, and his sister accompanied him. The other members of the party occupied a balcony near the "Columbus Memorial," and across the *Plaza de Armas* from the palace. By the aid of field-glasses they could look in at the palace windows, and see something of the proceedings there. Every housetop, the balconies, and the streets swarmed with people, and the feeling of expectancy was on tiptoe.

When, from Morro and other forts still in the hands of the Spanish, the farewell salute in honor of the departing Spaniards was fired, and Spain's national air was played by the bands, Benito grew tremulous with emotion, and, man that he was, could not repress the tears. When twitted by Lucia for this manifestation of sympathy with the government which had treated him so shamefully, he said not a word, but turned his head away in rage. Isabelita heard the remark and saw her brother's look of anger, and broke in with, "Yes, you may taunt and give vent to your pleasure, but I would like to know what the Cubans have done to bring about the humiliation which Spain suffers to-day?"

Lucia was just going to reply, and not in the sweetest spirit, when the United States guns from three great battleships in the harbor and from all the forts in possession of the United States pealed forth in honor of the coming Americans in a way that made the very earth tremble. Then the national air of the United States was played, and when the one Spanish flag that could be seen, the one on Morro, slowly descended, and the "Stars and Stripes" went up simultaneously on Morro, the Palace, Cabañas, La Punta, and many other places, including the ruins of the "Maine," the shouts, "*Viva la Cuba!*" and "*La Cuba Libre!*" went up from thousands of excited and rejoicing people.

Martinez and Gualterio could but help to swell the glad chorus, while Lucia, Eleanor, and Juanita joyfully clapped their hands. Juan and Alicia did not engage in any wild demonstrations, but their lips quivered and their eyes filled with tears. They had seen the flag of Spain go down from Morro and that of the United States go up, and a flood of unhappy memories had filled their minds. They remembered the bodily pain and the mental anguish the cruel war had cost them.

Benito and Isabelita sat in silence, feeling out of keeping with their surroundings, and for the moment their souls were embittered. They began to wish they had not come. Their interest was again aroused by

Martinez, who was using his field-glasses, crying out, "There comes Captain-General Castellanos out of the palace, escorted by two American generals!"

Castellanos was dressed in very simple style, and was walking with quick step between two United States generals. When opposite the palace of the city governor, some American ladies standing on its balcony waved their handkerchiefs to him. He gallantly bowed and kissed his hand to them. As these generals advanced toward where the little party was standing, Benito was glad that the others were too intent on what was transpiring before them to note his deep emotion. When Castellanos was almost beneath the balcony, poor, grieved and excited Benito quite lost his self-control, and taking from his bosom a small Spanish flag, waved it to the captain-general, and cried, "*Viva la Espana!*" Castellanos acknowledged the demonstration by removing his cap and bowing to Benito.

The cry aroused some Cubans on a neighboring balcony, and they angrily yelled, "Down with that traitor!" For a moment there was some dangerous demonstration in that neighborhood. Gualterio felt indignant at this imprudence on the part of Benito, and rebuked him for it. Benito and his sister were deeply stung, and said they had borne about all that they would bear. "*I think,*" said Lucia sharply, "some others of

us are bearing a great deal. Benito, by his rashness has endangered the life of every one of us in this party."

Martinez tried to interpose, but the now furious Isabelita proposed to her brother that they leave the balcony, and rose to start. Quick as thought, Juanita intercepted her, and putting her arms tenderly around her, gently kissed her flushed cheeks and begged her not to be so unhappy as to thus leave the party. For a moment Isabelita regarded her sternly, but on seeing the tears start from Juanita's eyes, she instantly softened and begged them all to pardon her rudeness.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

At least two persons went away from that balcony thinking and *thinking*. Those were Gualterio and Lucia. Gualterio loved Isabelita with a devotion that would die for her, and had loved her since the time she was brought, a very little girl, from Spain to Matanzas. Lucia's feelings toward Benito were very much of the same kind. Both Gualterio and Lucia loved Cuba with an undying devotion. This was something of the line of thought in each of their minds, "While I may love, deeply love, a bitter enemy of Cuba, would it be wise for me to form a lifetime alliance with one whose every heart-beat is antagonistic to that which is so dear to me?"

Judgment was in the ascendency and love was silent for the moment. "But how true to me, risking every thing for me, and how noble and generous in all but this *one* thing!" modestly suggested love—a selfish love. Then a nobler love, a love which sacrifices all—itsself, if need be—for the happiness of the object of its devotion, guided by judgment, suggested, "While I may love with the deepest and most constant affection, will it be wise

and truly noble to do that which will seriously jeopardize the happiness of the object of my devotion?"

These were not the reasonings of a silly mind nor the outgushings of an untrue and unloving heart, but were the rulings of a wise judgment whose every motive is permeated by a love which is too noble to be selfish. Just where Gualterio and Lucia were hesitating, thousands hurry blindly on, to realize in after years that they have made a sad mistake which can not be corrected in this short life.

But the end was not yet. The party next gathered on the Prado, the finest street in that city, to see the Seventh Army Corps, under General Lee, pass in review before Governor-General Brooke and other distinguished officials. When General Lee and his staff reached the review stand, they dismounted and took seats on the platform. Regiment after regiment marched by, keeping step to the thrilling music discoursed by the army bands. It was indeed a grand and inspiring display.

The Third Tennessee regiment had reached Cuba only a few days before. This was the regiment to which Lieutenant Carlton belonged, and Gonzalez and Martinez had called on him in camp only the day previous. When that regiment neared the stand, its band began to play "Dixie." Martinez and his sister had

often heard that air while they were in the United States, and now heartily joined in the demonstration which greeted the song. Lieutenant Carlton saw Juanita at the moment she was clapping her hands, and, though he did not recognize her as any one whom he had seen before, he gratefully bowed to her, forgetting himself far enough to almost lose his place in line.

When the last regiment had passed, and General Lee and staff mounted to follow on, there was a sudden and wild demonstration which caused many to fear a great riot had broken out. It was a demonstration accorded General Lee by the admiring Cubans. Men rushed into the street and almost lifted him from his steed, while many enthusiastically kissed his hand. Gualterio and Martinez, carried away by the excitement, were among the most enthusiastic. This was trying to Benito, but he said nothing.

As the members of the little company returned to the Olivera home, they were met by the Rev. I. Y. Barredo, who cordially greeted Alicia and Juanita, and stopped them long enough to inform them that there would be no services at his mission that evening.

Lucia asked Martinez who the gentleman was. When told that he was a Protestant missionary, and that Alicia and the young ladies had been attending his mission, she was amazed, and almost savagely asked

Martinez why he allowed his sister to mix with such heretics. He gently hinted that it could hardly be expected of him to control his sister in such matters. Then, when Lucia proceeded to express her hate for the Protestants, he ventured to earnestly expostulate with her, telling her that she was allowing her prejudices to blind her.

By the time the home was reached they were in a warm discussion, and when they and the other members of the party had gathered in the court of the building the discussion became general and heated. It *did* seem that some of them were blinded by prejudice, and more, for they not only said hard things but lost their temper.

Juan and Alicia were pained that the debate had become so heated, and gently tried to interpose, but the tide was too high and was not to be so easily stayed. Eleanor had seen the young lieutenant from the United States bow to Juanita, and now she sarcastically observed that she supposed influences like that would account for Juanita's devotion to the cause of the heretics.

It may be observed here, by way of parenthesis, that while Eleanor was the first to upbraid her brother with disloyalty to the beautiful Isabelita, because of the love he manifested for Juanita, still she had felt a sort of jealousy for her brother when she heard of Juanita's love for a certain young American.

Up to the moment of Eleanor's cutting insinuation, Juanita had been only pained by the bitter words which were being said; but now, that one whom she loved as she did Eleanor, and one who had known the incidents connected with her conversion from the Catholic faith, should make such a cruel and uncalled-for thrust, she quite forgot herself and sharply retorted, "It may be that the loyalty of *some* people to their religion is dependent upon their like or dislike of *some* one professing the same faith; but *I* propose to place the reason for *my* loyalty on a higher plane."

This was said with such sharp emphasis, and so flushed were the cheeks of the speaker, that more than one of the company were amazed. One look—one pained look—from the mother was all that was needed to bring Juanita to herself. Bursting into tears she hurried away to her room.

Martinez was so angered by this cruel wound inflicted upon his sister that he so far lost control of himself as to rudely leave the company, and follow his sister. This brought the unhappy discussion to a close and made the situation exceedingly embarrassing.

Just at this moment there was a knock at the door, and when Juan opened it he was confronted by two Americans, a soldier and a young lady, who hardly knew a word of Spanish. Juan did not understand

what the young soldier said, even when he asked if that was where Martinez Olivera lived. This made the young man feel that he had called at the wrong house, and bowing he and his companion were about to enter the carriage which they had just left, and to tell the driver to go on, when Eleanor caught sight of the soldier and told Alicia that it was the young American officer who had bowed to Juanita.

At this Alicia hurried into the room where Juanita and Martinez had gone and was about to call them, when she saw they were knelt side by side, and Juanita was praying in low but pleading tones. The mother did not dare to further intrude upon that scene, but gently closing the door after her, returned to the company. Her looks and confusion mystified the guests and even alarmed some of them. Eleanor, now completely humbled, sprang up and putting her arms around Alicia, earnestly begged to be forgiven for her hasty speech, and asked that she be allowed to go to Juanita to ask her forgiveness for the cruel words spoken to her. When Alicia replied to that last request, "not just now," the company was more startled than ever.

Juan who was still standing at the door awaiting the results of the discussion the two Americans were *trying* to have with the carriage-driver, on hearing his own name called several times, went out and asked the driver

whom the Americans were hunting. When he was answered that it was Señor Martinez Olivera, he then, as best he could by word and gesture, invited the young Americans in.

When they entered, the other guests arose and politely gave them seats. The young man now thought to give his card to Juan, something he ought to have done when he first came to the door. As soon as Juan read, "Lieutenant H. Carlton, Third Tennessee Regiment," he started to the room where Martinez and Juanita were, but was stopped by Alicia who laid her hand upon his shoulder and uttered the two words, "*poco tiempo*," which he understood to mean either that he could go very soon or that they would appear presently.

To the immense relief of about ten embarrassed persons, the front door opened and Marcos Gonzalez and his sister appeared. He, having met the lieutenant the day before, now cordially greeted him, and having been presented to the young lady, proceeded to introduce them to all present.

When Carlton asked if Martinez was at home, Gonzalez repeated the question to Juan, and was instructed to answer in the affirmative, and that Martinez would be in presently.

Just when the situation was becoming more trying than ever, Martinez came in and greeted Mr. Carlton most cordially. While he still held the lieutenant's

hand, "Are you not going to even see your little American friend?" came from the young lady. Indeed, he had not seen her until that moment, and even after she had spoken, it was difficult for him to recognize in the young woman before him the brown-haired schoolgirl with whom he had gone on so many happy excursions in the United States four years before.

Martinez asked Beatriz to call Juanita, but not to tell her who had come. When Juanita, with a happy smile on her face, entered, Eleanor could hardly restrain herself from anticipating Miss Lee, who without waiting to be recognized, proceeded to give Juanita what she (Miss Lee) afterwards said was a regular American hug.

This was indeed a happy surprise to Juanita, and a happier one to Martinez, for neither of them was aware that their good friend, Miss Mary Lee, was in the island. Really they did not know whether she was living or not, as they had not heard from her since they left the United States.

Now the company was a mixture indeed! Three Cuban captains and one lieutenant, one United States lieutenant, and one Spanish sergeant, when viewed as soldiers; and about as varied in religion and patriotism. But, in spite of all this, the hour the Americans remained passed most delightfully. All enjoyed laughing over the embarrassment with which the visit began.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

When the Americans were gone there came a scene which must have caused joy among the angels of Heaven. It was difficult to tell who began first, but it was evident that several were vying with each other as to who should be the first to confess his faults. Then it was hard to tell who was the happiest after the reconciliations were made, except that the cups of Martinez, Juanita, and their mother were full to overflowing.

Martinez, addressing the whole company, said, "Pardon me for intruding my own affairs upon your attention, but I have something I *must* tell you. Some of us have been rejoicing to-day that Cuba is free. Some of you know how I have struggled for that consummation, but I have been suffering from a slavery far more terrible than any nation can impose upon another. It was my master, the devil, who led me to act so rudely awhile ago, but now I am a free man. Christ has made me free, and he himself says that when he shall make us free, then are we free indeed. I used to cherish wicked hate in my heart, but now I love all men everywhere, and there is an unspeakable joy which fills my soul."

Almost before he could say this much his mother had

folded him in her arms. It was a holy scene, and tears of joy stood in the eyes of devout Catholics as well as in other eyes. Alicia felt that it was a sweet foretaste of Heaven. That twilight hour, New Year's day, 1899, was the most ecstatic season her heart had ever known. She felt that all she had suffered found recompense of reward in that hour.

The sweetness of that happy scene did more to soften the views of those fanatical Catholics than years of debate could do. Every one present knew that a wonderful and happy change had come over Martinez Olivera. Lucia knew it, felt it, and even rejoiced in it, in spite of the indefinable feeling, the consciousness of which seemed to almost break her heart, that somehow the distance between her and Martinez had suddenly become greater than it had ever been since the day she first learned to admire him. Yet she now loved him with a deeper and more disinterested affection than ever before. She no longer halted between two opinions. Her mind was made up—the decision was reached.

Martinez had never been satisfied with the abrupt manner in which his conversation with Lucia at Trinidad had closed, and he now sought an opportunity to speak to her of it. The opportunity came on the evening of the day following the evacuation ceremonies. It was as they sat together in the early twilight, at one of

the windows opening on the street. He frankly said to her that he was sure he now understood the motive by which she was then governed, and admired her conduct only the more. That he had firmly resolved that he would die rather than prevent her, if he could, from being loyal to her first love.

She unreservedly told him of the thoughts which the evening before had come into her mind; then said to him that she now esteemed him more than she had ever done before, and expected to continue to cherish warm feelings toward him. She longed to tell him something of the fierce struggle it had cost her to reach her decision, but felt that would not be wise.

The noblest and loftiest spirit had triumphed in Lucia as to her feelings toward Martinez, and, too, at a time when she felt that the love she had so long cherished for Benito could not be consummated in marriage.

An interview which had occurred between Gualterio and Juanita at almost the same hour was so similar to the one just described that it need not be dwelt upon except as to some of its peculiar features. Gualterio said that he had been, on the day before, driven to the conclusion that the distance between him and Isabelita was too great for them to dare consummate their love—deep as it was and long as it had been cherished—in marriage. That he had begun to hope that Juanita, whom

he had long loved and now loved with deepest affection, could find it in her heart to respond to his devotion, but that he would suffer martyrdom rather than give her pain by insisting upon his suit.

She kindly and without the least reserve said to him that her mind was fully made up to give her life to saving Cuba from a thralldom far more terrible than ever Spain had put upon it. That God had so richly blessed her and had given her such sweet peace and great joy, she felt that she owed all her love and powers to him in the mission field of Cuba.

There was deep pathos in her voice and tears in her eyes, when she told him that she would always love the Gualterio who had so generously and heroically suffered and done so much for her and hers, and would ever rejoice in all the true success and happiness which might mark his career. As to whether he remained a Catholic or not, that was of little concern to her, but most of all she desired for him the joy of a heart saved from sin, and for that happy consummation would continue to earnestly and constantly pray.

As to Benito and Isabelita, it must be said in their behalf that, though they knew confidential interviews were going on between Martinez and Lucia, Gualterio and Juanita, there was no trace of wicked jealousy in their hearts. Indeed, they had felt that those four, so

long associated amid the most trying scenes, and cherishing such high esteem for each other, should be left awhile to themselves. For this reason they had purposely asked Beatriz and Eleanor to walk with them in the neighboring plaza. Moreover, they too had been made to realize, by some of the occurrences of evacuation day, that the distance between them and those whom they had loved from childhood was far greater than they had before imagined, and they, too, were unconscious that, in reaching the lofty elevation of an unselfish and self-sacrificing love, in which they had been helped by the joyous scene of the evening before, they were bringing themselves only the nearer to the objects of their devotion.

CONCLUSION.

Now, with Alonzo Menendez an humbler and more harmless man, if not a better man; with Marcos Gonzalez almost restored in health, and laboring to restore his ruined fortune with fair hope of success, and still on the way to become such a Christian as will use his wealth for the greater salvation of Cuba; with Beatriz Gonzalez in love with no one in particular, but with all humanity, earnestly and joyously engaged in the work of lifting up and saving Cubans from the thralldom of sin; with Gualterio and Isabelita happily married and living in a little home of their own, along by the side of one to be, by and by, occupied by Benito and Lucia; with Juan Olivera in business again and rejoicing in its success because he is thus enabled to make his dear little wife comfortable, and to help her in the noble work that is the joy of her life; with Alicia helping and loving her husband as in the past, rejoicing in her children, busy in every good word and work, including constant prayer and earnest effort for the salvation of Señor and Señora A. Menendez; with Juanita in the United States attending a training-school for missionaries, getting ready for efficient and consecrated work in the mission fields

of her beloved island; and with Martinez also in the United States in a theological school, studying for the ministry that he may preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to his fellow countrymen, and daily resting in the peace which passeth all understanding and that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory—this story may close, and the author say to the kind reader—

“GOD BE WITH YOU TILL WE MEET AGAIN.”

THE END.



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